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NINETEENTH CENTURY.

VOL. II.

TEMPLE OF PALLAS.

LONDON HENRY G BOHN
1845

ROME,

IN THE

NINETEENTH CENTURY;

CONTAINING

A COMPLETE ACCOUNT OF THE RUINS OF THE ANCIENT CITY, THE REMAINS OF THE MIDDLE AGES, AND THE MONUMENTS OF MODERN TIMES.

WITH

REMARKS ON THE FINE ARTS, THE MUSEUMS OF SCULPTURE AND PAINTING, THE MANNERS, CUSTOMS, AND RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES, OF THE MODERN ROMANS.

By CHARLOTTE A. EATON.

FIFTH EDITION.

TO WHICH IS NOW FIRST ADDED A COMPLETE INDEX, AND THIRTY-FOUR ENGRAVED ILLUSTRATIONS.

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CONTENTS

OF

VOLUME THE SECOND.

LETTER LI.

Pag

Churches—Paintings—Frescos—Raphael's Sibyls and Isaiah—Augustines—Benedictines—Frescos of Domenichino and Guido—Angel's supper with St. Gregory—A meeting with the Pope—Guido's Archangel—The Capuchins—Trinità de' Monti—Ruined Frescos—Tomb and Habitation of Claude Lorraine. 1

LETTER LII.

Church of Ara Cœli—Steps ascended on the knees by Julius Cæsar, and the Modern Italians—Theatrical Præsepio—General of the Franciscans—Miraculous Bambino—Sacred Island—Æsculapius and St. Bartholomew—Indulgences—Trastevere and Trasteverini—Assassination—Games—Convents—Tasso's Tomb—View of Rome from Mount Janiculum—Comparison between Pagan Temples and Christian Churches. 15

LETTER LIII.

The Fountains of Rome 28

LETTER LIV.

Page
The Vatican Library 33

LETTER LV.

The Sistine Chapel—The Last Judgment—Michael Angelo—The Paolina Chapel—Sala Borgia 39

LETTER LVI.

The Camere of Raphael 46

LETTER LVII.

The Loggie of Raphael—The Paintings in the Vatican . . 56

LETTER LVIII.

Museum of the Capitol 62

LETTER LIX.

The Paintings and the Palazzo de' Conservatori in the Capitol—Academy of St. Luke—Raphael's St. Luke—Raphael's Skull 84

LETTER LX.

Roman Palaces—Palazzo Doria 91

LETTER LXI.

Palazzo Colonna 100

LETTER LXII.

Palazzi Barberini and Sciarra 106

LETTER LXIII.

Pag.
The Palazzi Massimi and Spada—Pompey's Statue—Palazzo Costaguti—Palazzo Mattei 113

LETTER LXIV.

Pasquin—Palazzo Braschi—Palazzo Giustiniani—Pantheon by Moonlight—Palazzo Borghese 120

LETTER LXV.

Palazzo Luciano 130

LETTER LXVI.

Palazzo Nuovo di Torlonia—Camuccini—Cavallini's Collection 132

LETTER LXVII.

Corsini Palace—Farnesina and the Farnese 137

LETTER LXVIII.

Quirinal Palace—Palazzo Albani—Palazzo Poniatowski—Gems—Staircase of the Palazzo Ruspoli—The Nozze Aldobrandini—Colossal Finger at Palazzo Altieri—Palazzo Stoppani—Raphael's House—Guido's and Guercino's Aurora—Villa Ludovisi and Palazzo Rospigliosi 144

LETTER LXIX.

Roman Villas—Raphael's Casino and Frescos—Borghese Gardens—Italian and English Gardening—Villas Altieri, Giraud, Pamfili, Doria, and Lanti—French Academy—Utility of an English Academy—Visit to Monte Mario—Villa Madama, Pastor Fido—Raphael's Frescos 156

LETTER LXX.

Page

Villa Albani 165

LETTER LXXI.

The Pope 173

LETTER LXXII.

Procession to the Minerva—Palm Sunday 176

LETTER LXXIII.

The Holy Week—The Miserere—Holy Thursday—Processions—The Interment of Christ—Sepulchral Illuminations of the Paolina Chapel—The Washing of Feet—The Serving at Table—The Penitenza Maggiore—The Cross of Fire—The Adoration by the Pope and Cardinals—The Relics—Illuminated Sepulchre of Christ at S. Antonio de' Portoghesi—Concert of Sacred Music 182

LETTER LXXIV.

Good Friday—The Tre Ore—The Pilgrims 191

LETTER LXXV.

Saturday—Baptism of the Jews—An Ordination—The Resurrection—Blessing the Horses—Confession and Communion 198

LETTER LXXVI.

Easter Sunday—The Benediction 203

LETTER LXXVII.

Page

Illumination of St. Peter's, and Fireworks from the Castle San Angelo 208

LETTER LXXVIII.

Convents—Taking the Veil 212

LETTER LXXIX.

Miracles 226

LETTER LXXX.

Blessing of the Horses—Festas—Italian Manners . . 233

LETTER LXXXI.

The Carnival 252

LETTER LXXXII.

Music and the Drama 260

LETTER LXXXIII.

Improvvisatori—Accademie 272

LETTER LXXXIV.

Poetry, Literature and Science 279

LETTER LXXXV.

Page

Childbirth—Marriages and Funerals—Dancing—Games—Common Stairs—Food of the Common People, &c. 287

LETTER LXXXVI.

Italian Sculptors—Canova—Thorwaldsen—Schadow—Mosaics and Cameos—Models—Works in the Precious Metals, etc. . 298

LETTER LXXXVII.

Egina Marbles 313

LETTER LXXXVIII.

Hadrian's Villa 318

LETTER LXXXIX.

Tivoli Cascades—Grotto of Neptune—Siren's Cave—Temple of the Sibyl, and other remains of Antiquity—Tour of the Hill—Villa of Mecænas—Lucien Bonaparte's Manufactories—Ruined Villas of the Ancient Romans—Excursion to Horace's Sabine Farm—Majestic Ruins of the Aqueducts 328

LETTER XC.

Frascati—Villas of the Modern Romans—Cato—Porcian Meadows Lake Regillus—Ruins of Tusculum—Site of Cicero's Villa—New Excavations—Tusculum and Pompeii—Lucien Bonaparte's Villa—Tomb and Villa of Lucullus—Monuments to Cardinal York and the Pretender 340

LETTER XCI.

Page

Grotta Ferrata—Cicero's Villa—Domenichino's Frescos . . 350

LETTER XCII.

Antiquities of Albano—The Emissarium of the Alban Lake—Ruins of Domitian's Villa—Tomb of Ascanius—Tomb of Pompey—Alba Longa—Antediluvian Vases 355

LETTER XCIII.

Ascent of the Alban Mount—Camp of Hannibal—Triumphal Way—Convent of Friars—Volcanos—Lake of Nemi—Aricia—Civita Lavinia—Cora—Temple of Hercules—Cyclopean Walls 362

LETTER XCIV.

Frascati—Banditti 373

LETTER XCV.

Banditti 377

LETTER XCVI.

Ostia 385

LETTER XCVII.

Sunset on the Palatine—The Colosseum and the Forum by Moonlight 389

LIST OF PLATES.

VOLUME II.

	Page
Temple of Pallas . . *Frontispiece.*	
Vintage Feast at a Villa of Trastevere . .	22
Raphael's Cartoons: Paul Preaching at Athens .	46
Apartment in a Roman Palace	91
Borghese Palace	124
Villa Madama	164
A procession of Penitents	176
Energetic Preaching	196
Carnival; the Corso	256
Tivoli, from the Convent of Il Santo Cosimato .	328
Temple of the Sibyl	330
Cicero's Villa	350
Castel Gandolfo	354
Gensano, on the Lake of Nemi	368

ROME.

LETTER LI.

CHURCHES — PAINTINGS — FRESCOS — RAPHAEL'S SIBYLS AND ISAIAH — AUGUSTINES — BENEDICTINES — FRESCOS OF DOMENICHINO AND GUIDO — ANGEL'S SUPPER WITH ST. GREGORY — A MEETING WITH THE POPE — GUIDO'S ARCHANGEL — THE CAPUCHINS — TRINITÀ DE' MONTI — RUINED FRESCOS — TOMB AND HABITATION OF CLAUDE LORRAINE.

In my last, I believe, I enumerated the few churches in Rome that possess any sculpture worth notice. Those that are adorned with fine paintings—or paintings that were once fine—are far more numerous; but these have generally suffered so much from time, neglect, dirt, damp, and smoky tapers, that their beauties, their colouring, and even, in many instances, their very design, are no longer discernible; so that you may go far to look at altar-pieces which boast the names of the greatest masters, and, after all, see nothing. The obscurity of the lateral chapels of the gloomy old churches in which they are hidden, no doubt, is one cause of this; and many of them might yet be restored, if brought out to light, and properly cleaned. If the Pope were to do this, and substitute copies in their place, I cannot conceive that he would be thought to have committed any great crime, even by the most orthodox of his subjects. At all events, the French, who were restrained by no scruples with regard to violating church property, or committing

sacrilege, and of whose love for the arts we hear so much, and see so little proof, might surely have taken them out of the churches, and arranged them in a gallery at Rome.

But, unless it were to ornament Paris, they took no thought for the preservation of the fragile works of genius. They have been the robbers, but I cannot discover how they have proved themselves the protectors, of the arts. They plundered Italy of its most valuable portable paintings, but they left all the untransportable ones to perish. I allude more particularly to the frescos, which, to the disgrace of the past and present government, are mouldering away on the mildewed walls of old churches, without a single precaution being used to check the rapid progress of their decay.

Neglect and ill-usage are fast obliterating the touches of departed genius; and those beautiful creations will soon pass away, whose perfection can never be equalled, and whose loss can never be repaired.

At the Church of Santa Maria della Pace, above the arches of the nave, are the four Sibyls of Raphael. They have suffered much from time, and more, it is said, from restoration; yet the forms of Raphael, in all their loveliness, all their sweetness, are still before us; they breathe all the soul, the sentiment, the chaste expression, and purity of design, that characterize the works of that immortal genius. The dictating Angels hover over the head of the gifted Maids, one of whom writes with rapid pen the irreversible decrees of Fate. The countenances and musing attitudes of her sister Sibyls express those feelings of habitual thoughtfulness and pensive sadness, natural to those who are cursed with the knowledge of futurity, and all its coming evils—of crimes which they cannot prevent, and calamities they cannot avert.

In the same church is the Presentation to the Temple, by Balthasar Peruzzi—a fine fresco; but it is extremely difficult to turn our eyes from the works of Raphael to those of Peruzzi.

In the church of the Augustines, is Raphael's inimitable fresco of Isaiah—a work sufficient of itself to have crowned his name with immortality. The fire and fervour of the

prophet beam from that inspired and holy countenance. Even in force and sublimity it will bear a comparison with the Prophets and Sibyls which Michael Angelo has left in the Sistine Chapel; and which, in my humble opinion, are by far the best of his works,—at least, of the few that now exist. It is in fresco that the chief strength and glory of both these great masters lie; and those who have only seen Raphael's oil paintings, (even the Transfiguration itself,) can form but a very inadequate idea of his transcendent powers.

In the convent adjoining the Church of St. Augustine, there is an excellent library, containing upwards of one hundred thousand volumes, open to the public; I mean, of course, the male part of it.

This convent, like every other, lost its rich possessions at the arrival of the French, and will never regain them. But the Augustine monks, to whom it belongs, still possess some little property. They make a great deal more by begging, by saying masses, and by the contributions of penitents; besides which, the Pope allows to forty of them forty-five paoli a-month (about thirteen guineas a-year) each. There are above fifty monks in all, and the majority of them are young men. What can be expected from a government that plunders the industrious to pay a pack of idle sturdy beggars! I mention those particulars, not that there is anything extraordinary in the Pope's pensioning these monks more than others, but because I was led to inquire into the affairs of these Augustines by a circumstance which accidentally came to my knowledge the other day; which, scandalous as it is, I shall relate to you, because I think hypocrisy ought to be unmasked.

There lived, and lives, in a neighbouring street called the Via della Scrofa, an honest cobbler, whose wife is young, and, as one of these good fathers thought, handsome. To warn her against the snares and wickedness of the world, he took pleasure in giving her his ghostly counsel; and she became, in consequence, so sensible of her sins, as to come frequently to him for confession and absolution. One morning, last week, the cobbler rose, as usual, at the peep of day, and went away to his work; but, in an evil hour, he

happened to return some time afterwards, and found the Augustine in the place he had quitted, by the side of his wife. The neighbourhood was alarmed with the horrible screams that issued from the habitation; but the cause was made evident when the holy father appeared, pursued by the cobbler, who cudgelled him all the way to his convent.

A priest told me the friar would be sent to *rusticate* for a time; that is, banished into the country; which is the usual punishment in these cases—when they are discovered.

In the Church of San Luigi de' Francesi, there is a chapel (the second on the right on entering) adorned with admirable paintings in fresco, by Domenichino, of the holy deeds and sufferings of St. Cecilia. The finest of them all is, I think, the Angel presenting crowns to St. Cecilia and St. Valerian, (her husband.) Nothing can surpass the exquisite beauty of the kneeling saints. The next in merit is the death of St. Cecilia. Reclining on a couch, in the centre of the picture, her hand pressed on her bosom, her dying eyes raised to heaven, the saint is breathing her last; while female forms, of exquisite beauty and innocence, are kneeling around, or bending over her. The noble figure of an old man, whose clasped hands and bent brow seem to bespeak a father's affliction, appears on one side; and lovely children, in all the playful graces of unconscious infancy, as usual in Domenichino's paintings, by contrast heighten yet relieve the deep pathos of the scene. From above, an angel —such an angel as Domenichino alone knew how to paint, a cherub form of light and loveliness, is descending on rapid wing, bearing to the expiring saint the crown and palm of glory.

The other paintings in this chapel are the apotheosis of St. Cecilia, extremely fine; St. Cecilia expressing her contempt of the idols, which is on a small scale; and St. Cecilia distributing clothes to the poor. These frescos are indeed works of first rate excellence, and, fortunately, though injured, are still very visible; but, as an old Italian said to me, looking ruefully at the most beautiful of them, "*Venti anni fà fu bella, bella assai, ma adesso si vanisce giornalmente.*"

If these are spoiling, the frescos, with which the rival

pencils of Domenichino and Guido adorned the Chapel of St. Andrew, are spoiled. They are at the Convent of St. Gregory, on the Cœlian Hill, which we visited the other day.

We stopped upon the steps of the entrance, to contemplate the dark masses of ruin heaped on the Palatine; the melancholy beauty of the cypress, with which they were blended, the majestic arches of the Aqueduct crossing the Via Triumphalis, and the grandeur of the mighty Colosseum. The deserted site of ancient Rome lay before us; the gigantic monuments of her fallen magnificence were sprea around us; wild weeds waved over the palaces of her emperors, and the unbroken solitude that reigned through her once busy scenes, stole over the fancy, with feelings of deeper interest than the picturesque combinations of the prospect alone could have awakened.

Whilst we were admiring it, the white robe of a Benedictine monk was swept over our faces by the wind, as he passed us. He apologized, and accompanied us into the outer court of the convent, where he found our lacquey pulling at the bell with all his might, and greviously complaining that he pulled in vain. The monk was courteously shocked to find we had been waiting, would not hear of our going away without seeing the frescos; and promising to send the porter immediately, he let himself in, while the lacquey continued his exercise without; but, though he made a peal which seemed rather intended to summon the dead than the living, nobody came. The brotherhood seemed to be plunged into an everlasting sleep. We heard the good father storming about at intervals, above us, and making a most tremendous clamour, while occasionally he put out his head, which, to our inexpressible diversion, was, by this time, enveloped in a night-cap, and exhorted the servant to ring louder and louder still—his rubicund face turning at last quite purple with rage, as he continued to vociferate "*Corpo di Bacco! Cospetto! Che vergogna!*" At last a lay brother came drowsily forth, looking like Sloth, and the enraged monk, having severely reprimanded him, shut the window of his cell, and consigned himself to bed and to his siesta.

Our yawning conductor unlocked for us the doors of three

little dingy chapels near the church; and on the damp walls of one of them we saw the vestiges of the matchless frescos of Domenichino and Guido—the spectres of paintings, "the ghosts of what they were."

Their decaying colours and fleeting forms, which the absorbing moisture renders every day more indistinct, leave little room now to judge of their former perfection; but while the faintest outline remains, the indestructible beauty of their design and composition must be visible.

Domenichino's fresco represents the flagellation of St. Andrew, which the Emperor at a distance is seated to witness. The suffering patience of the feeble saint is well contrasted with the brawny strength and unrelenting cruelty of the executioner—(a figure, by the way, which is an admirable study for a painter)—while the varying passions expressed by the bystanders are beautifully told.

Guido has chosen the moment in which the aged saint, led to execution, falls on his knees to adore the cross. His fresco, being on the dampest and darkest side of the chapel, has suffered even more than the other; and, from the deficiency of light, it is still more difficult to trace it: but, by frequent and patient examination in the brightest part of the day, much of the beauty of both may still be made out. But it would be the height of presumption now to attempt to decide the question of their respective merits, on which the first artists were divided in opinion, at the time they were originally painted. Annibal Caracci declared himself unable to decide the point, but he let an old woman decide it for him; for he saw her so violently affected by the flagellation, that he was ever afterwards convinced that Domenichino's must be the finest.

That untutored nature is, after all, the most unerring judge of excellence, even in many of those arts that seem the last result of refinement and cultivation, I am far from intending to dispute; and in most cases, like Annibal Caracci or Molière, I should be apt to take an old woman's opinion before a connoisseur's; but, in this instance, flagellation is so immediately addressed to the senses and nerves, that perhaps it was the nature of the subject, rather than the superiority of the work, that affected the old woman

with such violent agitation. She would shrink with natural horror at the sight of the lashes that lacerated the bleeding shoulders of the saint of Domenichino; but could she enter so fully into the holy rapture of devotion—the sublime act of adoration, that burst from the saint of Guido, and sustained his soul in that last and dreadful moment of an impending death of torture and ignominy, that human nature shudders to contemplate?*

St. Gregory used to feed twelve poor men every day here, and once, to his great surprise, he found there were thirteen; but the interloper proved to be an angel, who went away after eating his dinner, for which purpose indeed he seemed to have come, for he spoke not, and did nothing but eat. Of the fact there can be no doubt, because we saw the very table at which he sat.—"Eccola!" exclaimed the man, triumphantly, striking it with his hand, when somebody, laughing, asked if he believed the tale. A fresco of Guido's which represented this dinner of the angel and the beggars, is all but totally obliterated. Not so his choir of angels, in another of the chapels; but unfortunately, though beautiful, they are by no means the best of his works.

Among them there was one brown angel,—for angels, like women, are best distinguished by "black, brown, or fair;" there was one angel—brown as an Ethiopian, but with eyes so bright and piercing, and shining with such liquid lustre, that they shot through the heart of poor ———, and possessed such fascination for him, that he actually returned three times to look at them.

There is a statue of St. Gregory sitting in his pontifical robes, and very stately he looks. It is said to have been begun by Michael Angelo, who could never persuade himself to finish it; and I cannot wonder at it; for Popes, even when they happen to be saints, are but hopeless subjects for statuary.

I was, however, pleased to see the likeness of this extraordinary pontiff, who was favoured with the sight of an archangel on the top of the Castle St. Angelo,—with the company of an angel at dinner,—with the attendance of the

* There are very fine copies of these admirable compositions in the Palazzo Tenari, at Bologna.

Holy Ghost, in the form of a dove, at his ear, and with the love of the ladies. Certainly, a personage so blessed with the favours of angels and women, deserved to be sainted among men.

The old walls of his house lie scattered about, and are preserved with great care.

We had scarcely come away from seeing this Pope in marble, before we met another in reality.

We were proceeding along the ancient *Via Triumphalis*, that leads from the Church of St. Gregory to the Colosseum, when the coachman, observing to us, "*Viene il Papa*," drew up close by the side of the road, and stopped. His Holiness was preceded by a detachment of the "*Guarda Nobile*," who, as soon as they came up with our open calèche, commanded us, in no very gentle voice, to get out of the carriage. But ———, whose spirit did not at all relish this mandate, nor the tone in which it was uttered, manifested no intention to comply, and our servant, with true Italian readiness at a lie, declared we were *Forestieri* who did not understand Italian. The officers resolved to make us understand something else, repeated the order, and began to flourish their swords about our ears. But ——— sat with more inflexible resolution than ever, and all that was John Bull in his composition now refused to move. For my part, I make it a rule never to oppose these pointed arguments, and therefore jumped out of the carriage, and purposely contrived to get myself involved among the horses and drawn swords of the cavalry, knowing that I was in no real danger, and that ——— would forget his dignity, and come to my assistance, which he accordingly did; but otherwise nothing, I believe, but main force, would have got him out of the carriage. We saw the papal procession advance up the Triumphal Way, along which the victorious cars of so many Roman heroes and conquerors had rolled in their day of triumph. His Holiness seemed, however, content with the honours of an ovation, for he was walking on foot, and instead of a myrtle crown, his brows were crowned with a large broad-brimmed scarlet velvet hat, bound with gold lace. This hat he very courteously took off as he passed us, and afterwards made another bow, in return for our courtesies. Our lacquey was

on his knees in the dust, and all the Italians we saw, awaited his approach in the same attitude, then prostrated themselves before him to kiss his toe, or rather the gold cross, embroidered in the front of his scarlet shoes. His robes, which descended to his feet, were scarlet; on state occasions he wears no colour but white. He was attended by two cardinals, in their ordinary dress of black, edged with scarlet, followed by a train of servants, and by his coach, drawn by six black horses, the very model of the gilt, scarlet, wooden-looking equipages you may have seen in children's baby-houses. It looked exactly like a large toy.

The Pope himself is a very fine venerable old man, with a countenance expressive of benignity and pious resignation. His is the very head you would draw for a Pope. I have since frequently met him walking in this manner, on the roads, for exercise, after his early dinner.

The old King and Queen of Spain, and that iniquitous wretch the Prince of Peace, may be seen every day, at the same hour, about *twenty*-two or *twenty*-three o'clock, or an hour before sunset,* taking their accustomed drive, in two large coaches and six. There is a most amusing collection of ex-royalty, of all sorts and kinds,—remnants of old dynasties, and scions of new,—heirs of extinct kingdoms, and kings of ignoble families,—legitimate and illegitimate, all jumbled together just now at Rome. Besides the old King and Queen of Spain, there are the Ex-Queen and the young King of Etruria—the abdicated King of Sardinia, turned Jesuit—Louis Buonaparte, the deposed King of Holland, living like a hermit—Lucien Buonaparte, the uncrowned, living like a prince—and certain princesses living like—like—but comparisons are odious, and sometimes they may prove scandalous. In this pious pilgrimage of churches, we must think only of the lives of nuns and saints.

Let us go to the Capuchins. Their church, in the Piazza Barberini, possesses Guido's painting of the Archangel

* Time is always reckoned in the south of Italy from the setting of the sun, which is the *venti-quattro ore*,—twenty-four o'clock. If you ordered your carrriage at one o'clock, your coachman would bring it an hour after dark.

Michael trampling upon Satan. It is a daring attempt for a mortal hand to pourtray the forms of heaven, to make palpable to human vision those unreal, undefined images of exalted sublimity and unearthly beauty that float before the poet's fancy, and are dimly revealed even in the dreams of gifted genius. Perhaps it is impossible to satisfy the mind with any representation of the Angel of Light, which, in its loftiest aspiration it essays not to picture; but Guido has made the nearest approach of any painter to realize the presence of a celestial spirit, and if the being he has pourtrayed were to appear before us, we should worship him unquestioned, as a delegate and a power of Heaven.

Radiant with divinity, and clad in celestial beauty, that light and ethereal form tramples into the bottomless abyss, and chains in torture the gigantic and herculean fiend, that howls and gnashes his teeth with impotent rage. There is no exertion or effort of strength on the part of the angel —it is the act of volition alone; there is no struggle or attempt at resistance on the side of the subjugated demon —for resistance is vain. We feel that the united powers of earth and hell could not cope for an instant with the might of that slender arm, which wields the omnipotent sword of Heaven.

It is said that Guido, having a pique against the Pope,* "damned him to everlasting fame," by painting his portrait in the likeness of Satan, and so strong was the resemblance, that it was impossible not to recognize it.

I imagine Guido did not exactly meet the same return for this as Ghezzi, who caricatured Benedict XIV. and all the college of cardinals; but that good-humoured Pope was so delighted that he made him a handsome present.

Domenichino's Ecstacy of St. Francis, which, in a fit of piety, he gratuitously painted for this church, is not, perhaps, one of the best specimens of his powerful pencil. It is a good painting, but a bad Domenichino. The only fresco of Giotto in Rome adorns this church. It represents St. Peter walking on the waves; and, considering the infancy of art in which it was painted, it is, indeed, a most wonderful and masterly performance. It is executed

* Urban VIII.

in mosaic at St. Peter's; so also is Guido's Archangel; and Domenichino's St. Francis is at this moment being copied at the mosaic manufactory.

There is in this convent a sort of museum of bones, formed from the skeletons of the deceased Capuchins, to which the inexorable friars refused us ladies admittance.

The Church of the S. S. Trinità de' Monti once boasted what Nicolas Poussin pronounced to be "the third picture in the world"—Daniel da Volterra's Deposition from the Cross. It ranked, in his estimation, after the Transfiguration, and the Communion of St. Jerome. But it was totally destroyed by the French, in their clumsy attempt to remove it, at the time they plundered Italy of her works of art; and this masterpiece is now irreparably lost to the world. St. Helena's Discovery of the Cross, another celebrated work by the same artist, on which he spent seven years of labour, was also ruined, and the church now contains nothing worthy of a visit, except the tomb of Claude Lorraine. His house, built upon his own design, with a simple Doric portico, which he loved to introduce into his paintings, stands close beside it, and commands one of the most enchanting prospects that the eye ever beheld;* although it is modern Rome only,—the multiplied domes of her churches, and the towers of her convents, rising beneath the pine-covered heights of Monte Montorio and Monte Mario, that meet the view. Ancient Rome is not visible; one proud obelisk, that rises before the church, alone tells of its ruined grandeur. But the scene has a charm so inexpressible, a beauty so peculiar to itself, that its study alone might well have formed the genius of a Claude; and those who have gazed upon its morning brightness, and its evening sunsets,—or watched the harmonious tints of golden splendour fade in the soft floating purple clouds that mantle the west, must have beheld realized the pictures of Claude Lorraine. On the opposite side of the way, adjoining the church, is the house of Nicolas Poussin; and

* It was the residence of the authoress during the chief part of her stay in Rome.

close by it, a house once inhabited by Salvator Rosa. The Trinità de' Monti is still the favourite residence of men of genius. It is thronged with the *studii* and the dwellings of artists.

The Church of Santa Maria Vallicella, re-erected by that renowned saint, Filippo Neri, and therefore called the Chiesa Nuovo, is built after the designs, and adorned with the frescos of Pietro da Cortona. On the ceiling of the Sacristy, the Archangel bearing the symbols of our Saviour's Passion to Heaven, is one of the best of his works I have ever seen; the colouring is thought particularly good, and the effect of the cross, which, though painted on a horizontal ground, appears perfectly perpendicular, has been much admired. But even when called upon to approve and commend them, the paintings of Pietro da Cortona do not touch our hearts with admiration; they want the vivifying powers of true genius. Equally remote from its seducing errors and its redeeming beauties, they keep on in the dull beaten path of mediocrity. We see nothing to offend, and nothing to charm us; and even without faults they please less than many more imperfect works.

This church was adorned with the altar-pieces of Rubens, Guercino, and Caravaggio, all of which are utterly ruined. In the Oratorio, into which the room where Saint Filippo died has been converted, we were shown his portrait, by Guido. The fathers of the order of *I Padri dell' Oratorio*, instituted by himself, are now only twelve in number, and inhabit a convent large enough, I think, to contain some hundreds. It is built in the form of a square, enclosing an internal court, with open corridors, three stories high, and every part of it is airy, clean, and commodious,—which we ascertained; for as the good monks were, as usual, fast asleep when we arrived, we took the liberty of walking all over it.

Indeed, the lives of the whole race of monks and friars, black, white, brown, and grey, in every country where I have had the happiness of seeing them, may be aptly described by some lines of Prior's:—

"They soundly sleep the night away,
They just do nothing all the day;
They eat, and drink, and sleep—What then?
Why then—they eat and sleep again.
If human things went ill or well—
If changing empires rose or fell
The morning went—the evening came—
And found *these friars* just the same."

In the Church of Santa Maria dell' Anima, the Nativity, by Giulio Romano, though it has suffered from injury and restoration, is the best of his paintings I have seen in Rome.

The Church of San Andrea della Valle, is built upon the spot where the Curia of Pompey once stood, in which Cæsar fell. You may imagine the interest with which we visited it, although not a stone remains, nor an object appears to recall the memory of the deed that altered the destinies of the world. Yet did that memorable moment not the less strongly recur to us, when the blood of Cæsar was poured forth on the ground on which we trod—when Brutus, mistaking the excess of crime for virtue, stifled the soft pleadings of nature, the natural beatings of his own heart, and plunged his treacherous dagger into the bosom of the friend to whom he owed his life.

Paintings of the martyrdom of saints, and monuments of the fanaticism of sinners, now met our view; yet was not that memorable scene which our imagination recalled, much the same? Was not Brutus a fanatic, and Cæsar a martyr?

The one was a moral, or, if you will, a political fanatic —the other, the martyr of ambition,—but it was the ambition of "heroes, not of gods."

But we came here, not to moralize over the death of Cæsar, but to admire the frescos of Domenichino. He painted the Flagellation and the Glorification of St. Andrew, near the altar, and the Four Evangelists on the angle of the dome. Among the latter, the beauty of St. John caught my attention. The colouring is peculiarly fine, the conception grand, the design correct and perfect, the composition pure, and the expression true and forcible. They are works of real genius, and succeeding generations have

done them the justice which their contemporaries denied Pietro da Cortona, and all his crowd of scholars and imitators, were envenomed in their animosity against Domenichino; and when these frescos were exposed to view, they raised so violent an outcry against them, that the prejudice was universal. Domenichino, who heard them abused on all sides, took it very patiently, and every morning, as he went past to his labours, he used to stop to look at these much reviled productions; and regularly, after attentively gazing at them, he shrugged his shoulders, and exclaimed—"Well, after all, they don't seem to me to be so very bad—*Non mi pare d'esser tanto cattivo.*"

His "Cardinal Virtues," in the Church of San Carlo a' Catinari, could be surpassed only by himself. Yet, beautiful as they are, I did not admire them, on the whole, quite so much as these; and his four frescos, in the Church of S. Silvestro on Monte Cavallo, representing David dancing before the Ark,—Judith with the head of Holofernes,—Esther before Ahasuerus,—and Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, I thought inferior to both. Whether they really were so, or that I was then as tired with churches and paintings as you must be at this moment, I won't pretend to say. His Assumption, a small fresco on the roof of Santa Maria in Trastevere, is well worth visiting.

In pity to you and myself, I will, for the present, conclude this pilgrimage of the churches; but do not flatter yourself that you have done with them. Good night.

LETTER LII.

CHURCH OF ARA COELI—STEPS ASCENDED ON THE KNEES BY JULIUS CÆSAR, AND THE MODERN ITALIANS—THEATRICAL PRESEPIO—GENERAL OF THE FRANCISCANS—MIRACULOUS BAMBINO—SACRED ISLAND—ÆSCULAPIUS AND ST. BARTHOLOMEW—INDULGENCES—TRASTEVERE AND TRASTEVERINI—ASSASSINATION—GAMES—CONVENTS—TASSO'S TOMB—VIEW OF ROME FROM MOUNT JANICULUM—COMPARISON BETWEEN PAGAN TEMPLES AND CHRISTIAN CHURCHES.

THE ugly old Church of Santa Maria in Ara Cœli, which crowns the highest summit of the Capitoline Hill, and is supposed to occupy the site of the splendid Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, is adorned in the inside with twenty-two ancient columns, and on the outside with a flight of one hundred and twenty-four steps of Grecian marble, said to have formed the ascent to the Temple of Romulus Quirinus. Up these Pagan steps I have frequently seen good Christians painfully mounting on their knees,—a method of locomotion they seem to think more to the taste of the Virgin at the top of them, than the vulgar mode of walking; and it is either practised in order to repay her for some benefit already received, or to obtain some desired gratification. One woman told me she had gone up on her knees, because she had made a vow to do it, if the Madonna would cure her of a bad sore throat; in this case it might be termed a debt of honour. Another performed this exploit, in order to prevail upon the Madonna to give her a prize in the lottery, and really, in this instance, it could, I think, be considered no better than a bribe; but as the ticket came up a blank, it is plain the Virgin was not to be corrupted.

Nineteen centuries ago, Julius Cæsar, at his first triumph, ascended on his knees* the steps of this very temple, (that of Jupiter Capitolinus). Strange! after the lapse of ages, to see, on the same spot, the same superstitions infecting opposite faiths, and enslaving equally the greatest and the weakest minds!

The last time I visited this church, it was crowded almost to suffocation, by peasants from remote mountain villages, arrayed in their grotesque and various holiday costumes, who had performed this festive pilgrimage in order to see the *Bambino*, the new-born Jesus, and pay their respects to the Virgin, who, at this season, sits in state to receive company. This exhibition is called the *Præsepio*, and, after Christmas, is to be seen in almost every church, and in most of the private houses in Rome; but it appears in its full glory in Ara Cœli, and there we went to see it.

The upper part of the church, around the great altar, was adorned with painted scenes, and converted into a stage, in the front of which sat the figure of the Virgin, made of wood, with her best blue satin gown and topaz necklace on, and her petticoats so stuck out, that unless she wore a hoop, which the friars, who were in the secret, positively denied, it was impossible to believe that her accouchement had yet taken place. There, however, lay, in proof of the contrary, the new-born *Bambino*, the little Jesus, rolled in rich swaddling-clothes, and decked with a gilt crown; beside him stood St. Joseph and the two Marys; and at a little distance, were seen two martial figures, who, we were given to understand, were Roman centurions, made of pasteboard, and mounted on white horses. Near them, projected from a side-scene, the head of a cow. And all these figures, divine, human, and bestial, were as large as life. But off the stage, there was a figure even larger than life. He was the General of the Franciscan order, who resides in this convent. The rope that girded his waist could not, I think, have been less than two yards in length. He might have represented Falstaff without stuffing; and certainly I never saw, even on the stage, a caricature of a fat friar, approaching the circumference of this portly father. It is said there cannot

* Dion. l. xliii. c. 21.

be too much of a good thing, but certainly, I think, there was rather a superabundance of this good capuchin.

I have heard many of the Italians, even of the middling and lower classes, cut much the same jokes upon the friars, and laugh as much at their fondness for eating and drinking, and all sorts of sensual indulgences, as the English do. Yet, by a strange apparent contradiction, they are almost invariably the confessors, the preachers, the spiritual monitors and counsellors, selected by all ranks, in preference to the secular clergy.

There are *only* a hundred capuchins now in this convent, but, before the French turned them all out, there were nearly four hundred.

I forgot to tell you, that the aforesaid *Bambino* which we had been to see, was originally brought down from heaven one night by an angel, and is endowed with most miraculous powers, and held in wonderful repute. I suppose no physician in Rome has such practice, or such fees. When people are in extremity of sickness, it is sent for, and comes to visit them in a coach, attended by one of the friars. One of our Italian servants assured me it had cured her of a fever, when all the doctors had given her up; and I firmly believe it; for, upon inquiry, I found that the doctors, resigning her to the care of the *Bambino*, discontinued their visits and medicines. The *six* blisters they had put on were allowed to be taken off; she got neither wine nor broth, and drank nothing but pure water to relieve her thirst. After hearing this account, I was no longer surprised at the *Bambino's* well-earned reputation for curing diseases.

This church takes its name of "Ara Cœli" from the vulgar tradition of the Sibyl's prophecy to Augustus, of the birth of the Redeemer, and his consequent consecration of an altar on this spot, "to the first-born of God"—a monkish imposition, wholly unsupported by historical testimony.

Leaving the Capitol, we crossed the *Ponte Quattro Capi*, anciently the Fabrician Bridge, to the island of the Tiber, whose date, if history may be credited, is more modern than that of Rome itself, and whose creation is not the work of nature, but of chance, and of man.

It is related by Livy,* that at the expulsion of the Tarquins, a large field belonging to them which was consecrated to Mars and afterwards called the Campus Martius, was covered with ripe corn. It became the property of the Roman people; but, disdaining to eat the bread of their tyrant, they threw the sheaves into the river, which, as is usual at that time of the year, was low; the corn stuck in the muddy bottom, and receiving continued aggregations of slime, soil, and other substances, deposited by the stream: it gradually formed a solid island, which was afterwards strengthened, and the margin built round with walls.

When the ten ambassadors, sent from Rome during the plague, returned from their solemn embassy to the Temple of Esculapius in Epidaurus, the sacred serpent, which had voluntarily embarked itself with them, left the ship, swam to the island, and was never more seen by man.† That it was the god who had assumed this shape, and that he had chosen the island for his habitation, could not be doubted. The pestilence ceased—the island was formed into the shape of a ship, in commemoration of the sacred vessel which brought him, and, near its extremity, the great Temple of Æsculapius was built. An hospital was attached to it for the cure of the sick; but the Roman slaves were almost invariably exposed before the portico, to be cured, if such was the will of the god, or if not, to perish. To check this inhuman practice, the Emperor Claudius ordained, that those who recovered should never more return to their former servitude.‡ Even after the arrival of Esculapius, the island was denominated the Sacred Island; and the temples of Jupiter, of Faunus, and perhaps of other deities, were built upon it.

The site of the Temple of Esculapius is now occupied by the Church of St. Bartholomew; and in the garden of the convent, where the statue of the god, now at Naples, was found, there is still to be seen the sacred serpent, sculptured upon the prow of the vessel, into which the extremity of the island was formed. But, as the good fathers would by no means incur the guilt of letting a female look at it, we were

* Vide lib. ii. cap. 5. Also, vide Pliny, Hist. lib. ii. in principio.
† Livy, lib. ii. cap. 13, 14. ‡ Suetonius, Claudius, 25.

constrained to forego that criminal gratification, and patiently to await the return of the privileged sex of our party, who went to see it.

In this church they offer plenary indulgences: nostrums for the cure of the soul have supplied the nostrums for the cure of the body, that used to be administered here. Corporeal is changed into spiritual quackery, Pagan into Catholic superstition, and Esculapius into St. Bartholomew.

I soon grew tired of looking at some bad frescos by Antonio Carracci; and observing the inscription of "*Indulgenzia Plenaria*," I asked one of the young friars, why, since they had the power of giving "unlimited indulgence" to all, he would not grant us the restricted indulgence of walking through the garden? He crossed himself in admiration of my extravagance, and ejaculated, "Jesu Maria!" I then urged him to explain to me what plenary indulgence meant. He said it was "a mystery; a thing incomprehensible to us; a spiritual good; a blessing of all the saints." But all these, and all that followed, were separate and reluctant responses to my varied interrogations.

Did plenary indulgence give permission to perpetrate murder? I inquired, "No! no!"—"Could murder, when committed, be expiated by it?" That was again a mystery. Murder *could* be expiated. The "*Santo Padre*" (the Pope), who had received from the Prince of Apostles the keys of heaven, and the power to forgive sins, *could* pardon that, or any crime—but *how*, he might not say; all that he would say to a heretic like me, after all my cross-questioning, was "that for hell, he believed, no indulgence was to be obtained, but from purgatory there was plenary indulgence accorded to the faithful, through the Madonna, St. Peter, and the Pope."

Our theological controversy was here broken off, much to your satisfaction, I should suppose, as well as the friar's and mine, by the return of our friends. We left the church, and crossing the Ponte San Bartolomeo, formerly called the *Pons Cestius*, from its founder—though who he was nobody knows or cares,—entered Trastevere, that part of Rome which lies beyond the Tiber, and along the foot of Mount Janiculum.

In Trastevere there are no remains of antiquity, but abundance of monuments of superstition—churches full of the shrines of saints, and convents full of imprisoned sinners —plenty of houses, but few inhabitants. These inhabitants, however, boast of being descended from the ancient Romans, and look on the upstart race on the other side of the river with sovereign contempt. They will not intermarry with them, nor associate with them.

They call themselves *Eminenti*, and support their claims to superiority by the ferocity of their manners. Bloody quarrels and vindictive passions, rage, jealousy, and revenge, seem to reign among them with untameable violence. They, among all the people of Rome, are the most addicted to carrying the prohibited knife, which, in the paroxysm of irrepressible fury, they so often plunge into each other's breast.

I think we are quite mistaken in our estimate of the Italian character, in one respect. Murder is generally committed in the sudden impulse of ungovernable passion, not with the slow premeditation of deliberate revenge. That it is too common a termination of Italian quarrels, it would be vain to deny; and it is equally true, that however Englishmen may fall out, or however angry they may be—drunk or sober—they have no notion of stabbing, but are usually content with beating each other. But in England murders are generally committed in cold blood, and for the sake of plunder. In Italy, they are more frequently perpetrated in the moment of exasperation, and for the gratification of the passions. An Italian will pilfer or steal, cheat or defraud you, in any way he can. He would rob you if he had courage; but he seldom murders for the sake of gain. In proof of this, almost all the murders in Italy are committed amongst the lower orders. One man murders another who is as much a beggar as himself. Whereas, our countrymen walk about the unlighted streets of Rome or Naples at all hours, in perfect safety. I never heard of one having been attacked, although the riches of *Milor' Inglesi* are proverbial. Amongst the immense number of English who have lately travelled through Italy, though all have been cheated, a few travellers only have been robbed; and of

these not one has either been murdered or hurt.* I am far, however, from thinking that murders are more frequent in England than in Italy. In England they are held in far more abhorrence; they are punished, not only with the terrors of the law, but the execrations of the people. Every murder resounds through the land—it is canvassed in every club, and told by every village fire-side; and inquests, and trials, and newspapers, proclaim the lengthened tale to the world. But in Italy, it is unpublished, unnamed, and unheeded. The murderer sometimes escapes wholly unpunished—sometimes he compounds for it by paying money, if he has any—and sometimes he is condemned to the galleys, —but he is rarely executed.

The *Trasteverini* are passionately fond of the game of *Morrà*. It is played by two men, and merely consists in holding up, in rapid succession, any number of fingers they please, calling out at the same time the number their antagonist shows. Nothing, seemingly, can be more simple or less interesting. Yet, to see them play, so violent are their gestures, that you would imagine them possessed by some diabolical passion. The eagerness and rapidity with which they carry it on render it very liable to mistake and altercation—then frenzy fires them, and too often furious disputes arise at this trivial play, that end in murder. *Morrà* seems to differ in no respect from the *Micare Digitis* of the ancient Romans.†

There is another pastime among them called *La Ruzzica*, or *La Rotuola*, which seems to me to bear a close resemblance to an ancient Roman sport—that of throwing the discus.

The Trastevere game consists in coiling a long string round a piece of wood, of the shape of a Gloucester cheese, as tight as possible—then rapidly untwisting the string, when the wood flies off with immense velocity, and the

* Not in 1818, when this work was written; but subsequently, an English gentleman was killed, in consequence of his determined resistance to being plundered. The authoress and her brother, when travelling, were stopped and robbed by a party of banditti near Velletri, but not personally maltreated.

† Cic. Divin. 11, 41. Off. cxi. 23.

length of its course is the criterion of victory. This diversion was prohibited, for it sometimes happened that the legs of unwary passengers were broken, by coming in contact with these bowling machines; but it is still practised, though no longer in the streets or public roads.

The resemblance of the form of the *ruzzica* to that of the discus, and the attitude of the Trasteverini as they throw it, so strongly recalled to my mind the Discobolus, that I could not help thinking it must have taken its origin from that sport.

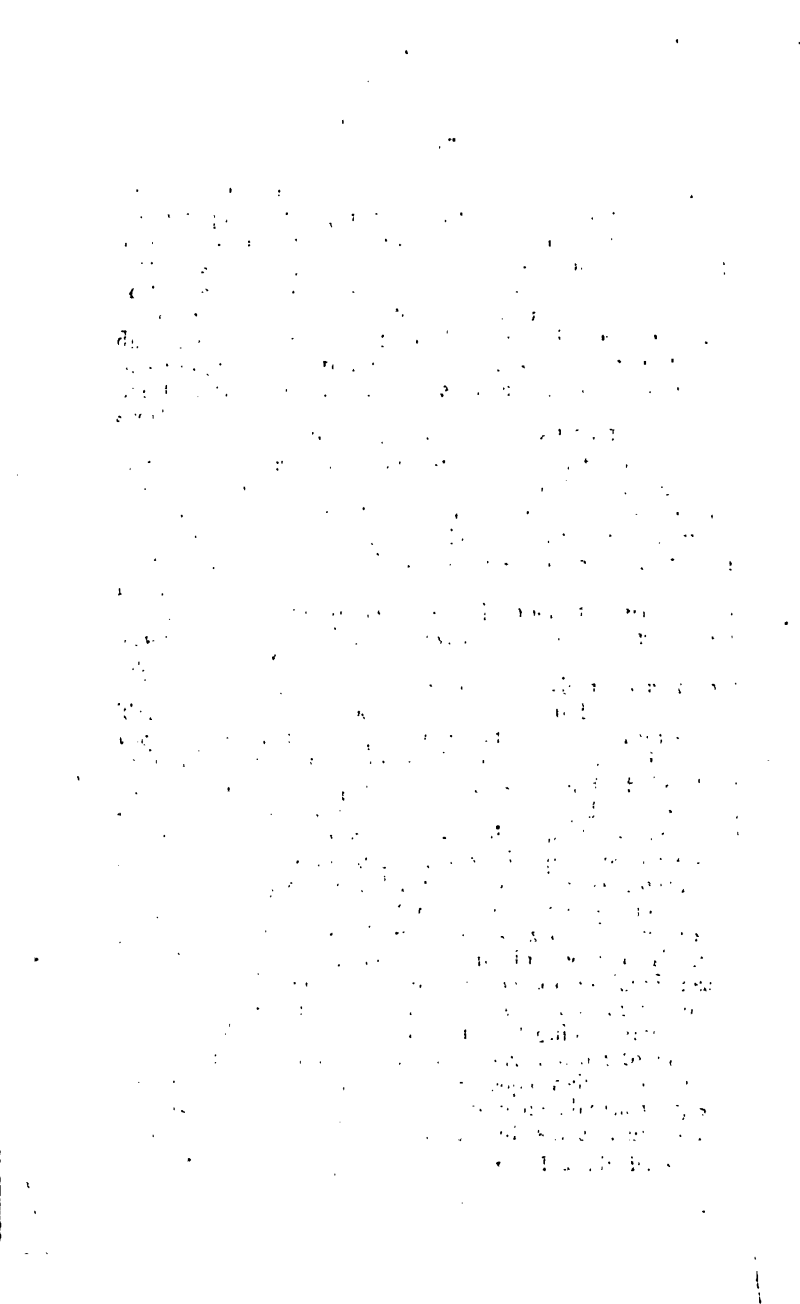
They are the only people in Rome at all fond of dancing, and on the afternoons of Sundays, and other festa, especially during the Carnival and about Easter, most amusing exhibitions may be seen, of young handsome couples, in their picturesque holiday costume, dancing with an infinity of attitude and expression, in the courts and gardens of Trastevere.

Trastevere is said to have been the ancient quarter of the Jews, and its inhabitants now, as formerly, bear no very high character.*

The men struck me as a strong and vigorous race; yet Trastevere is said to be very unhealthy, and it is certainly very depopulated. Its palaces are deserted, and its streets untrodden. The scourge of the *malaria* infests it in the summer; and it is apparently for this reason that they have established so many convents here, thinking, I suppose, it is no matter how many nuns die—and, indeed, as far as the enjoyment of this world goes, it would, perhaps, have been better for many of them that they had never been born.

In Italy, a "*monasterio*" means a nunnery—and a "*convento*" a monkery or friary, which is exactly the reverse of the application of these names in France and England. This part of Rome seems to have been considered insalubrious even in ancient times. Pliny, in one of his invectives against Regulus, says, "He [Regulus] staid at his villa, on the other shore of the Tiber, in order to have the malicious gratification of making people visit it at that unwholesome season;"† an accusation which, by the way, is no proof of the philosopher's discernment, since Regulus must

* Martial, l. i. Ep. 116. † Vide Ep. ii. lib. iv.



have done far more injury to his own health by a continued residence, than his friends could have received by their occasional visits—but it is a proof that the air here was even then reputed unhealthy at certain seasons.

Tacitus, too, somewhere abuses the Vatican, which is a part of Trastevere, for its bad air.* As a proof of the discernment of the Popes, or the desire they have to send the sick poor to a better world, they have set down the great hospital of the Borgo San Spirito in the very worst air of this insalubrious region.

The Church of Santa Maria in Trastevere, like all the other old churches of Rome, is adorned with ancient columns, all of which are of Oriental granite; but their varying proportions and capitals proclaim them to be the spoils of different Roman edifices. There are seven of the Ionic capitals of these columns mentioned by Winkelman, which, instead of the rose, have Lilliputian figures of the little god Harpocrates, with his finger on his mouth. On the left of the altar are two ancient mosaics, one of which represents a sea-port; and the roof is adorned with a small Assumption in fresco, by Domenichino.

If we may believe the priests, this was a public Christian church as early as the beginning of the third century. It might be so; for after the death of Septimius Severus (A.D. 211), the Christians, during a period of nearly forty years, not only enjoyed toleration, and obtained the privilege of openly having places of worship, but were even high in favour at the Imperial court. It is even asserted, that Alexander Severus, in the early part of his reign, "imbibed the maxims of Christ," and entertained serious thoughts of erecting a temple to him as one of the gods.†

In these times, it is related, a miraculous fountain of sacred oil sprung up in this church, and the spot is still marked with the inscription of *Fons Olei*.

As we had already visited the Convent of Saint Cecilia

* The soldiers of Vitellius's army, while quartered there, fell victims to the same fatal fever which still depopulates its precincts. Tacitus, Hist. lib. ii. cap. 93.

† Vide Gibbon, (Decline and Fall, vol. ii. p. 369,) who quotes the Augustan History, p. 130.

once, we did not return to it, but toiled on foot up a long and steep ascent to the Church of Sant' Onofrio, where the remains of Tasso repose.

A paltry inscription on the wall alone marks the spot; for, neglected in death as well as life, his ungrateful country has denied a tomb to the poet whose memory is at once her glory and her shame. She has not even

"To buried genius raised the tardy bust."

Italy was unworthy of having Tasso for a son. But his name is worshipped in every land,—his moment is erected in every heart; and though the laurel crown, which never encircled his living brows, is not suspended over his grave, no traveller from the remotest regions of the earth will leave "the Eternal City," without shedding a tear over the stone that covers the genius and the sorrows of Torquato Tasso.

In this gloomy convent was passed the close of a life made wretched by oppression, by contumely, by poverty, and by chains;—maddened by sensibility, and cursed by genius. It was by his last request that he was buried here. —"Buried here!" I involuntarily exclaimed, as we gazed on the dark flag-stone, trodden by every vulgar foot that records the tale.—And is the genius that awakened those strains of divine poesy, which will resound through the earth while it rolls in its orbit, really buried here?—Is the fancy whose heaven-taught powers erected such glowing visions of beauty and of bliss, sunk in this narrow spot? Is the heart whose blighted feelings wept immortal tears through long years of neglected solitude, and burst its prison bars, entombed beneath this lowly stone?—How can we believe, that the powers which embraced the universe, and seemed intended for eternal duration, are thus shrunk to nought; and that in this speck of earth is all that remains of Tasso?

From the tomb of Tasso we *might* have turned to the frescos of Domenichino in the portico, which have for their subject the miracles of Saint Jerome; but one glance at their worn and washed-out appearance sufficed; and with some feeling of indignation against the land where the

fanaticism and the miracles of saints are honoured and commemorated, while taste and genius are oppressed and forgotten—we gave one glance to the poet's grave, and left the convent of Sant' Onofrio.*

We again climbed the steep sides of Mount Janiculum to S. Pietro in Montorio, and from the terrace in front of it, which seems to overhang Rome, we enjoyed the finest view of the Ancient and Modern City I had yet beheld.

Beneath us were spread its massive ruins, overshadowed with the dark pine and cypress; its deserted mounts, its fallen temples, its splendid basilicas, its gorgeous palaces, and its cloistered convents; even the proud dome of St. Peter's lay at our feet—the magnitude of the Vatican was shrunk to nothing. Far over its glowing gardens and depth deptes of cypress shade, the eye wandered, delighted, to the majesty of Monte Cavo, the storied Alban Mount, hung with ancient woods; to the purple hues that painted the Sabine Hills, on whose sheltered sides reposed Tivoli, Frascati, and Palestrina, as if inviting our approach; and to "*gli Alpestri dossi d'Apennino*," whose snowy summits terminated the view.

But I am forgetting, in the delight of retrospection, how insufferable is description, and how wholly inadequate to give the faintest idea of the beauty of any prospect.

I turned from this enchanting scene, slowly and reluctantly, to enter the ugly old church of San Pietro in Montorio, for which the finest picture in the world, the Transfiguration, was originally painted—but fortunately, both for its preservation and the just display of its unapproached perfection, it is no longer here.

* These nearly obliterated frescos of Domenichino, of which, on subsequent careful examination, I found the outline still visible, represent the Baptism of St. Jerome,—St. Jerome Tempted by the Devil, who is rolling on the ground, and scratching his head in despairing perplexity what next to essay against the virtue of the saint,—and St. Jerome Scourged by an Angel, an event which is gravely asserted to have happened, though why the saint was chastised in this extraordinary way I could not learn. I afterwards saw, in a house adjoining the church, a Madonna, by Leonardo da Vinci, unquestionably original; to which, being unprovided at our first visit with a Cardinal's pass of entrance to convents, we, ladies, were refused admittance.

The Flagellation of Christ, designed with all the energy and correctness of Buonarotti, and painted with all the vivid colouring of Sebastian del Piombo, still adorns one of these obscure chapels.

I believe Mr. Angerstein's Resurrection of Lazarus,* which was also designed and painted by the united powers of the same great masters of design and colouring, was taken from this church.

In the cloister of the convent, there is a small modern circular Doric temple, erected by Bramante, at the command and expense of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, on the spot which tradition points out as the scene of the martyrdom of the prince of the apostles.

Small and simple as this little building is, Bramante has contrived to make it a proof that the best of Italian architects (and he was the best) would have succeeded as ill in temples as they have done in churches.

If, however, there is a complete contrast in architectural beauty—it is curious to see in how many particulars, small and great, modern Roman Catholic churches correspond to ancient Pagan temples. It is not only in the pictures and statues, in the plan and the decorations, in which we might be glad to trace even a closer resemblance—but it is in the plurality of gods, in the worship of images, in the holy places, in the real presence, in the altars and votive offerings, in the holy water, in the multiplied ceremonies, in the pompous processions, in the refuge of sanctuaries,—in all that we see, hear, and do,—that we might almost as well be in a Pagan as in a Christian temple. Even the glory that surrounds the heads of saints formerly encircled the statues of gods. Images of Apollo and Diana, of Fortune and Pallas, had this *nimbus*, or halo of light, round their heads—and it seems afterwards to have become common.† The Virgin is often represented with the crescent, as the symbol of chastity—exactly like Diana of old.

It is curious, too, that the doorways of ancient temples, like those of all the Italian churches, were closed with a

* Now in the British National Gallery.

† Winkelman, Hist. de l'Art, lib. vi. cap. 2. § 37.

heavy curtain.* But we should never be done, if we were to go through the parallel between them in all its minutiæ.

And here I gladly finish this hasty and perhaps imperfect survey of the churches of Rome, with the fullest conviction that you will not complain of its brevity, however you may suffer under its tediousness—that what is dull in investigation, cannot possibly be amusing in description; and that it is unreasonable to expect you to listen with pleasure to the description of what I could not see with patience.

* Winkelman, sur l'Arch. § 64.

LETTER LIII.

FOUNTAINS.

FROM St. Pietro in Montorio, where we finished our weary visitation of Roman churches, and, I believe, almost made a vow never to enter another as long as we lived, from motives of curiosity; we walked to the Fontana Paolina. Long before we came in sight of it, the rushing of its mighty waters stole gradually upon our ear; but the sound did not sufficiently prepare us for the sight, and we stood transfixed with astonishment to behold three noble cascades, falling in foam into an immense basin, whose surface was agitated like the waves of a lake by their concussion.

The beautiful solitude of its situation, surrounded by a deep evergreen shade, and yet commanding one of the most enchanting prospects over the whole of Rome and the plain of the Campagna, bounded only by the romantic heights of the distant Apennines, is one of its greatest charms.

The Fontana Paolina, by a whimsical coincidence, combines the names of its architect and maker, Fontana, and Paolo V. I never could forgive that good-for-nothing old Pope, for despoiling the Forum of Nerva of its precious remains, to ornament the tasteless fabric which the joint skill of himself and his builder has raised. Two dragons' heads, fixed on each side of them, and which, instead of fire, spout out insignificant streams of water, contribute to spoil the fine effect of these beautiful cascades, which have no parallel even in Rome. Nothing, indeed, strikes a stranger with more just admiration on his arrival in this capital of the world, than the immense numbers of fountains, which pour forth their unceasing flow of waters on every side. It is a luxury, the full value of which cannot be felt but in such a climate as this; and those only who have known that delicious moment, when the blaze of the summer-day fades

at last in the golden clouds of evening, can understand the voluptuous delights with which, in its hushed hour of still ness and repose, you listen to the music of their dashing murmur, and rest beside their freshness.

The beautiful fountains that play before the grand front of St. Peter's, alone of all those of Rome, satisfy my imagination, and delight my taste. I know not how to describe to you their beauty; but visit them in the repose of evening, when that moon, which here shines like a brighter planet, walks in her glory through the heavens; when the stars awake their mysterious fires, and the soft moon-beam falls upon the lines of the Grecian columns, on the swelling grandeur of the majestic dome, the tall height of the ancient obelisc, and the sweep of the circling colonnades; when it brings every beauty into view, throws every defect into shade—when the freshness of the new-born breeze fans the cheek with its voluptuous breath, and the voice of the falling waters soothes the soul to rest;—visit them then, and you will feel their enchantment.

To describe, or to listen to the description of all the principal fountains of Rome, would indeed be a terrific task. They are, generally speaking, all deficient in that greatest of beauties, which, though it would seem the easiest to be found, is always the last attained—the beauty of simplicity; and which is to the fine arts what action is to the orator,—the first, the second, and the third requisite.

The fountain of Trevi has been renowned through the world, and so highly extolled, that my expectations were raised to the highest stretch; and great was my disappointment when I was taken into a little, dirty, confined, miserable piazza, nearly filled up with one large palace, beneath which spouted out a variety of tortuous streamlets, that are made to gurgle over artificial rocks, and to bathe the bodies of various sea-horses, tritons, and other marble monsters, which are sprawling about in it. After some cogitation, you discover they are trying to draw Neptune on, who, though stuck up in a niche of the palace wall, as if meant to be stationary, is standing at the same time with his feet on a sort of car, as if intended to be riding over the waters.

Now, all this seems to me to be in very bad taste. I have no objection to the monarch or the nymphs of the sea, to tritons, or river-gods, or any other description of these creatures, either in painting or sculpture, where all is equally fictitious, and consequently all in unison; but it strikes me as an outrage upon probability and taste, to have real water and artificial monsters, and to see sea-horses and men carved of stone, sitting immoveable in the pure living stream. Indeed, the copious quantity and pellucid clearness of the water, is the only beauty that I could see in the Fontana di Trevi. It would, I think, be difficult to dispose of so much water to less advantage than the contrivers of this fountain have produced; and they have done their utmost, by the enormous palace they have built above it, and the colossal statues they have stuck up in it, to diminish as much as possible the effect of the immensity and the grandeur of such a body of water.

This water is the delicious Acqua Vergine, the same that flowed into Rome in the age of Augustus, and was brought by M. Agrippa for the use of his baths. Modern Rome is chiefly supplied with it; although the Fontana Felice, on the Quirinal Hill, is said by some to be of still finer quality.

That Fountain is called "Felice," because Sixtus V., who built it, was called *Fra Felix* in the cloister; an auspicious name, which augured well the fortunes of him who was raised from the station of a shepherd boy to a throne,* and not only to the rank of a prince, but to be a ruler of princes. It is also called *Fontana di Termini*, from its vicinity to the Thermæ of Diocletian.

It represents Moses striking the rock,—or rather Moses does not strike the rock, nor is there a rock to strike; but it is supposed he does; and he stands in one niche with a rod in his hand, and Aaron and Gideon, or some such superfluous persons, are stationed in others, amidst bas-reliefs.

What have four lions, either ancient or modern, to do with spouting out water? and what business have they here? Two of these lions, formed of basalt, are of Egyptian

* He was the son of a poor peasant in the March of Ancona, and tended his father's flocks.

extraction, and are supposed to have been brought captives to Rome, when Augustus returned after the battle of Actium. The poor animals were taken from the portico of the Pantheon, to perform this unnatural employment. Rams' heads, lions, masks, all kinds of mouths, were used for this purpose by the ancients as well as the moderns. We seem to have kept all their absurdities in addition to our own.

The front of the Fontana di Termini is built of large masses of Travertine, adorned with little columns of marble, and surmounted with a long inscription; the whole is weighed down with a cumbrous attic, and is much admired.

In the Piazza Navona are three fountains; the centre one supports the obelisc brought from the Circus of Caracalla. It consists of a great mass of artificial rock, to which are chained four river gods—a truly *Bernini* idea! He has not placed them at rest, in the recumbent, meditative, classical posture of river-gods, but fastened them in the most uneasy attitudes, and unnatural contortions; and in order to show proper contempt for the architecture of Borromini, who built the front of St. Agnes's church, the two water deities on the side next it are made to throw up their eyes to it in the shrinking attitude of terror, as if expecting it to fall upon them. But the Church of St. Agnes stands where it did, and has no appearance of moving; so that the alarm of these huge creatures seems only ludicrous and cowardly. If they had held up their hands and eyes at its ugliness, I should have had some sympathy with them; but of its stability there is, unfortunately, no reason to doubt. From each of these colossal river gods, springs his own *dribbling* stream. You see at once the source of the Nile, which some stupid people imagined had never yet been traced—and the Danube spouts out his mighty waters, in force sufficient to fill a moderate-sized bucket. After a short course down the sides of the artificial rock, the four great rivers of the different quarters of the world are lost in the basin of the fountain, which represents the Ocean.

I forgot to mention that there is, besides, a cavern in the rock, in which a lion and a horse reside in the most amicable manner possible; though what they do there in the middle

of the sea, I do not exactly comprehend. This fountain is contrived so as to overflow annually; and during the burning heats of summer, for a few evenings in the month of August, it is the delight of the people of Rome to drive about among its waters, which fill the Piazza Navona. It was suggested by an ingenious friend of mine, that this custom was probably the remains of the sports of the Naumachia, exhibited at the annual games in honour of the gods, at this very period of the year, and in this very spot, which was the ancient Circus Agonalis.

There is a much-admired fountain in the Piazza Barberini, from a design of Bernini's, in which a stone Triton sits upon four dolphins, and throws up the water from a large shell. But the prettiest of these minor fountains, in my opinion, is that of the *Tartaruche*, in the Piazza Mattei, in which four bronze figures, in singularly graceful attitudes, support a vase, from which the water flows. It derives its name from the four tortoises that adorn it.

On the whole, I admire, with fond admiration, the fountains of Rome; not that as fountains I think them beautiful; but that falling water, in ample quantity, must be beautiful in a climate like this, where its sound, even in winter, is so sweet to the senses. I love to repose my fancy upon the three noble cascades that are poured forth at the Fontana Paolina; the copious streams which burst from the rocks of the Fountain of Trevi; and those silver fountains that throw high in air their glittering showers within the grand colonnades of St. Peter's. These are beautiful; but for all the ugly statues of monsters and men,—sea-horses and dragons,—prophets and lions,—and fishes and gods,—I hold them in utter abhorrence, as well as the clumsy and hideous buildings erected above them.

LETTER LIV.

VATICAN LIBRARY.

THE Vatican Library is called the largest in the world; not that it contains the most books, but the most space; for although it has been formed ever since the days of Hilary, pope and saint, and been augmented by the accumulation of several subsequent popes and saints; and has received the entire libraries of various kings and cardinals, (amongst others, that of Queen Christina of Sweden,) and part of the library of the Roman Emperor of Constantinople —yet, after all, I am assured, on what I believe to be good authority, that it scarcely possesses forty thousand volumes, although the amount is generally stated at double that number.

The collection of manuscripts is, however, extremely rare and valuable, and amounts to upwards of thirty thousand. Some of these are very curious. The famous Virgil, with its costume paintings of the Trojans and Latins, supposed to have been executed about the age of Constantine; the Terence, with its paintings of masks, of nearly as ancient date; the manuscript of Pliny, with its pictured Noah's ark of animals; Henry VIII.'s letters to Anne Boleyn; and his Treatise on the Seven Sacraments, which he presented to Leo X., and in return received the title of Defender of that Faith which he was so soon to overthrow; the Tasso and Dante, and an infinity of others,—interesting as they are, have been already so often described, that I shall abstain from any observation upon them. The Abate Maio discovered, amongst these MSS., about the year 1824, a part of the lost books of Cicero *De Republica*, over which, however, some of the treatises of St. Augustin had been written, but the original MS., although much defaced, is said to be still legible.

The only access to the Vatican Library is from the Museum. The great door, which is of bronze, and very magnificent, seems intended for ornament rather than use, for it is never opened. The usual entrance is by a small door, which opens into the office of the seven clerks, or writers of the principal European languages, who are attached to the library. A cardinal is always the nominal librarian, and this room is hung with the portraits of these *Cardinali Bibliotecarj*, amongst which there is one by Domenichino.

Passing on through an ante-room, you enter a hall two hundred feet by fifty, entirely painted in fresco, with colours so glaring, and contrasts so violent, that it reminded me of an immense China bowl. This capacious apartment contains no visible sign of books, and indeed you may walk through the whole Vatican Library without seeing one: for they are shut up in wooden presses, which may conceal either great wealth or great poverty.

In this hall there is a column of most beautiful Oriental alabaster, spirally fluted, brought from the Baths of the Emperor Gordian, near the Trophies of Marius, and erected upon a pedestal of *verde antico*. The capital is unfortunately lost.

Here also are two small Etruscan cinerary urns, of terra-cotta, with the common sepulchral bas-relief of the fratricidal combat of Eteocles and Polynices.

On either side of them appear their guardian spirits, who, the Etruscans supposed, never left man from the cradle to the tomb. Or rather, perhaps, they here represent the Furies, who urged on the royal brothers to this sanguinary combat, and who stand exulting over their victims, flapping their long wings. But the Etruscan deities are generally winged. Minerva is represented on an Etruscan monument like Mercury, with wings both on her heels and shoulders; and Venus, Diana, and several others, have the same attributes.

We were shown the remnant of a piece of cloth of Asbestos, found in a sarcophagus on the Appian Way, which the man who exhibited it assured us was quite indestructible by fire; at the same time that he very consistently lamented that it was reduced almost to nothing, by having

been so often burnt. The fact is, that to a certain degree it resists the action of fire, and it was therefore used by the Romans to collect the ashes of the wealthy dead.

Having conceived this hall to be the whole library, great was my surprise to behold at its extremity, on either hand, a long gallery open upon me in almost interminable perspective.* I actually stood mute with astonishment—a rare effect on the female mind; and like the ass between two bundles of hay, I scarcely knew which gallery to take.

The one is terminated by the Sacred, the other by the Profane Cabinet, as they are pleased to call them; the first being a collection of Christian, the last of Pagan antiquities.

On our way to the former, we encountered the statue of St. Hippolytus, with a modern head, but a body of undoubted authenticity, and unquestionably the most ancient statue of a Christian extant. It is a work of the age of Alexander Severus, and was dug out of the catacombs. Opposite to him sits Aristides, not the ancient philosopher, but a rhetorician of degenerate days; whose statue bears no more comparison to that Aristides we had so much admired at Naples,† than does his fame to that of the Grecian sage; and we passed him without one tribute of respect or admiration.

The Sacred Cabinet consists of curiosities taken from the catacombs—laborious carvings of Madonnas in ivory—little pictures of saints on gilt grounds—bas-reliefs of the barbarous ages, representing martyrdoms—instruments used in martyrising the early Christians, and a long *et cetera* of all sorts of heterogeneous articles. There are a number of red velvet jewel cases—empty; the French having carried off all the precious stones they could find, without any regard to their sanctity; so that the ear-rings and brooches of the saints and martyrs, in all probability, are now adorning the belles and elegantes of Paris.

The adjoining chamber of the Papyri is the most beau-

* We afterwards learned that it is 1200 English feet in length.

† Found in Herculaneum. One of the finest statues in the world.

tiful little *bijou* I ever beheld. Its architecture and decorations are by Raphael Mengs, who was employed by Clement XIV. to make it, and to paint the roof in fresco. He has represented History writing on the wings of Time, and Fame hovering in the air, and sounding forth to the world the deeds she records. The composition is not, perhaps, very learned, but the figure of Time is fine, and the colouring, when compared with the horrible daubing of the present French and Italian schools, deserves the greatest praise.

Mengs, like many other artists, was too much cried up in his lifetime, and cried down since his death.

The pavement of this superb little apartment is of the richest marbles; the walls are encrusted with *giallo* and *verde antico*, with porphyry and pilasters of Oriental granite of the highest polish; and the whole decoration is as much distinguished by taste as magnificence.

The Papyrus manuscripts, which consist of ancient volumes unrolled, are enclosed in the walls in long columns under glass. They are of the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries, in Greek and in Latin; but in matter are of little interest. When closely examined, the papyrus has the appearance of waxed cloth.

The library, at this extremity, has been extended by the present Pope, who has added some rooms, in which the books can actually be seen, and even got at. He has also formed a narrow little gallery, the walls of which are entirely composed of inscriptions in terra-cotta, that otherwise might have been entirely lost. I am sorry I can give you no account of them, my attention having been entirely engrossed by some Etruscan, or, more properly, Grecian vases, of singular beauty. An immense number of vases are ranged on the top of the book-cases, along the whole extent of the gallery; but these are by far the largest and finest, and, indeed, surpass any I have seen, except the unrivalled collection at Naples.

This library possesses a very fine cabinet of medals, which was carried off, and has been restored, by the French; but it is still in such complete confusion, that it cannot be inspected.

There is, too, attached to the library, a whole chamber filled with a fine collection of prints, to which it is necessary to have a particular order for admittance, and in another chamber, are the secret archives of the Vatican, to which there is no admittance at all.

We traversed the whole extent of this immense gallery to the Profane Cabinet, at the other extremity, which contains a most entertaining collection of antiques. Some of the bronzes, especially, are extremely curious and rare. Two bronze heads, from their singular beauty, first catch the eye; and also, but from an opposite cause, a bronze Etruscan figure with the bulla, or amulet, about his neck, bearing an Etruscan inscription, a part of which has been deciphered, signifying that it was a votive statue. It is very much in what we should call Chinese taste; the form and features, as well as the style, bear a near approach to it. There are numbers of Penates; of those long-legged, spindly, little bronze figures, with enormous casques, exactly like cocked hats, on their heads, which abound in every museum. Among these I saw the Egyptian *Sethos*, dressed in a tunic, and armed with a shield and a long sword, which, I think, precisely answers to the description of the *Secutor*.* I observed some types for stamping—so close an approach to types for printing, that I cannot but marvel how the ancients missed that invaluable invention.

There are several lead water-pipes, marked with the plumbers' names; but I might write a little volume, were I to particularise one half of the curiosities I observed. I will, therefore, pass over the most complete collection of antique kitchen and household utensils I have ever seen, and many exquisite little pieces of art in gems, bronze, &c.

Perhaps the most singular thing in the whole, of its kind, is the long hair of a Roman lady, found in a tomb on the Appian Way, and in perfect preservation. It is strange

* The *Secutores* were one of the kinds of gladiators. They fought with the *Retiarii*, who endeavoured to entangle them by throwing their net over their head, while the Secutores pursued them to prevent their purpose, and slay them.—Vide Isidor. xviii. 55.

how it alone should have escaped the common doom, and be, I may say, the sole physical remnant of hundreds of generations. Their bones, their ashes, their every vestige of mortality, have all vanished; not even the paring of a nail, as far as I know, is left of all that lived and died in the long ages of Roman glory or degeneracy—except these tresses; which still remain brown and unchanged, as when their beauty first pleased the eye of her whom they adorned.

LETTER LV.

THE SISTINE CHAPEL—THE LAST JUDGMENT—MICHAEL ANGELO—THE PAOLINA CHAPEL—SALA BORGIA.

THE French, in permanently placing the most celebrated portable productions of art at Paris, would have committed an irreparable injury to sculpture and painting; for, by removing the apparent strongest temptations to artists to travel through Italy, they would have excluded the majority of them from the true schools of art, which are the frescos of ancient masters, and the inumerable and unremovable works of Grecian sculpture,—especially bassi rilievi,—to the study of which painting itself owes much that is great and beautiful in its design, conception, and execution.

There is no part of Italy that does not present a field of study. Bologna, Florence, Venice, Naples,* and even Genoa and Milan, abound in instruction and delight. But Rome surpasses all. Here, at every step, the artist will drink in instruction, that years of study could not give him in our Gothic countries. If he has taste or genius, here it must develope itself, and find in every surrounding object aliment for its growing powers.

The inexhaustible treasures of the Vatican, the Capitol, and the Villa Albani, with innumerable statues, bas-reliefs, and fragments of exquisite sculpture, that meet the eye at every turn; the frescos of Michael Angelo, Raphael, Annibale Caracci, Guido, Domenichino, and Guercino—all these, and far more, does Rome contain. Until you know these frescos,

* Naples for the sculptor, Bologna and Venice for the painter, and Florence for both, are inestimable schools. But let it be remembered, that though the sculptor may be excused the study of painting, the painter can never sufficiently study sculpture.

you cannot know what painting is. From these alone can you understand the true principles, powers, and perfection of the art. Experience only can make this be felt. Thousands who behold the Transfiguration never dream that they see the least part of Raphael. Hence the student, satisfied with the collection of the Louvre, would rarely have explored Europe to visit the forgotten treasures of Italy.

The French only lopped a few branches of the tree of art—they could not remove its root and stem.

But, independent of the inconceivable mine of instruction contained in those models, which must be fixtures here, the artist will here find a finer nature. Forms, whose contour and symmetry far surpass in perfection those of our ungenial climates; whose attitudes and expression, untaught grace, and classical beauty, I have often thought even approach the ideal,—continually meet his sight; and their study must give to his imagination new combinations of all that can constitute perfection.

To return to the frescos, the value of which cannot be justly estimated at the first glance,—I imagine no one can now see the Last Judgment of Michael Angelo without a feeling of extreme disappointment. It is, indeed, somewhat difficult to see it at all. The architect of the Sistine Chapel has so ingeniously contrived to exclude the light, that, unless when the sun shines unclouded, high in the meridian, the attempt is vain; and even then, blackened with the smoke of innumerable tapers, during three centuries, it may be supposed that many of its beauties are now obscured. Besides this, a huge, high, red velvet canopy, lifts its awkward back from the altar into the very centre of the picture, breaking up the subject, and spoiling the effect of the whole.

We had interest enough with some of the red-legged race to get this machine removed, for our especial benefit, during two or three days; but until a Pope of taste shall wear the tiara, there is no chance of its being carried off altogether.

The common engraving—bad as at is, for a good one is still a desideratum,—will give you a far clearer idea of this celebrated fresco than the most laboured description; therefore I shall content myself with observing, that it covers the

whole of the wall of the upper end of the chapel, from the ceiling to the floor. High in the centre, is Christ judging the world, in the very act of denouncing to the wicked beneath, on his left hand, that awful sentence—"Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." While glory ineffable surrounds his head, and saints and beautified spirits hover around him, the heavenly ministers of divine vengeance are hurling the condemned downwards to the bottomless abyss. Their last uplifted looks to that heaven which is shut against them for ever,—the ghastly fear depicted on their countenances,—and their desperate struggles of resistance, are horrible beyond conception.

At this corner of the picture, at the bottom, is represented Charon, ferrying them in his boat over the dark waters of Styx, and driving the reluctant spirits out with his oar, exactly as Dante describes him—

"Batte col remo qualunque s'adagia."

The depths of hell open on its brink, and yelling demons, with diabolical gestures, and girt with hissing snakes and scorpions, such as even Dante's imagination could scarcely have conjured up, stretch forth their fiery arms to seize the trembling victims.

On the other hand, around the throne of glory, angels are sounding the golden trumpet, at which the dead arise. Their lifeless re-animating forms, half lifted from the grave, are so finely designed, that, unnatural as is the subject, they seem to come to life before your eyes. Others, disencumbered of their mortal clay, are ascending into heaven, and angels, stooping from the clouds, are assisting them to rise into light and glory.

The grand and prominent figure of the Judge and Redeemer of the world, instantly strikes the eye, serves as the dividing point of the picture, and gives to the composition clearness, grandeur, and effect. Above his head, the fleeting forms of angels are seen bearing the symbols of his passion. St. Bartholomew, below, offers up his skin, the symbol of his martyrdom; and the figures of some other saints are done with a force and grandeur of design truly wonderful. But I have a particular objection to some of

the female saints. St. Catherine of Siena, in a green gown, and somebody else in a blue one, are supremely hideous. It seems that one of the popes—I believe Paul IV.—in an unfortunate fit of prudery, was seized with the resolution of whitewashing over the whole of the Last Judgment, in order to cover the *scandal* of a few naked female figures, in the grandest painting in the world! With difficulty his Holiness was at last prevented from utterly destroying this unrivalled composition, but he could not be dissuaded from ordering these poor women to be clothed in these unbecoming petticoats. Daniel da Volterra, whom he employed in this office, received, in consequence, the name of "Il Braghettone."

On the whole, I think the Last Judgment is now more valuable as a school of design, than as a fine painting, and that it will be more sought for the study of the artist, than the delight of the amateur. Beautiful it is not—but it is sublime;—sublime in conception, and astonishing in execution. Still, I believe, there are few who do not feel that it is a labour rather than a pleasure to look at it. Its blackened surface—its dark and dingy sameness of colouring—the obscurity which hangs over it—the confusion and multitude of naked figures which compose it, (to say nothing of the grossness of such a display)—their unnatural position, suspended in the air, and the sameness of form, attitude, and colouring, confound and bewilder the senses. These were, perhaps, defects inseparable from the subject, although it was one admirably calculated to call forth the powers of Michael Angelo. He has, indeed, here shown himself master of the grand and the terrible; and the learning, the science, the perfection of design, the vigour of genius, and the grandeur of thought, this sublime composition evinces, must be admired by all who are capable of estimating them.

To merit in colouring it has confessedly no pretensions, and I may venture to say, that I think it also deficient in expression—that in the conflicting passions, hopes, fears, remorse, despair, and transport, that must agitate the breasts of so many thousands in that awful moment, there was room for powerful expression, which we see not here. But it is

faded and defaced; the touches of immortal genius are lost for ever; and from what it is, we can form but a faint idea of what it was. Its defects daily become more glaring—its beauties vanish; and, could the spirit of its great author behold the mighty work upon which he spent the unremitting labour of seven years, with what grief and mortification would he gaze upon it now!

It may be fanciful, but it seems to me that in this, and in every other of Michael Angelo's works, you may see that the ideas, beauties, and peculiar excellencies of statuary, were ever present to his mind; that they are the conceptions of a sculptor embodied in painting.

Michael Angelo, indeed, deserves our highest veneration for the just principles which he rescued from oblivion, for the emancipation from Gothic barbarism, and for the total and happy reformation he effected in art, by introducing the study of the antique, of ideal beauty, and of nature, in all their truth, simplicity, and grace. He was the reviver of true taste, and may be called the author of all the excellence we have since enjoyed—the master of successive generations; but, perhaps, at least as far as painting goes, he is rather to be admired for the excellence he has caused in others, than for his own.

In fact, he always painted unwillingly, and few of his works remain. The Sistine Chapel may be said to contain them all. The frescos of the roof were painted before the Last Judgment, and, though less famed, are, in my poor opinion, far superior, more especially the noble figures of the Sibyls and Prophets, round the frieze, which have a grandeur and sublimity that painting has rarely equalled. These are in far better preservation than the last Judgment; so also are the nine *Miltonic* pictures, which adorn the roof —representing the figure of the Eternal Father, calling the world out of chaos—the Creation of man, and of woman—their bliss in Paradise—and, above all, the last beautiful picture of their expulsion from those blessed seats. But it would be vain, by description, to attempt to give you any idea of the perfection of these great master-pieces of painting. I will therefore refrain, even from the expression of admiration, and the dear delight of criticism.

These, then, are all that remain of the *painter*—Michael Angelo—

> ———"quel ch'è per sculpe e colora
> Michel, più che mortal, Angel divino!"*

for we are told that he never painted more than one piece in oils,† which is in the gallery at Florence. But many of his designs, some of which may be classed amongst the grandest compositions in the world, were executed by Sebastian del Piombo, Marcello Venusti,‡ and others.

In the Paolina Chapel, indeed, there are—or rather were—some of his frescos; but they are so thoroughly blackened with the smoke of the thousand tapers that burn before the Sepulchre of our Saviour in Passion Week, that they are all but totally obliterated.

Besides, the dungeon darkness that reigns in this chapel, even on the brightest summer's day, renders it absolutely impossible to see them. As well as I could guess at them, under such circumstances, they must have been grand compositions. The subjects are the Conversion of St. Paul, and the Crucifixion of St. Peter—both admirably suited to his powers.

It is cruel to see works such as these, the sole remains of the Father of Painting, which might serve for the instruction and admiration of future generations, not only abandoned to neglect and decay, but mercilessly, and one would think, sedulously destroyed. But it is no use to be angry.

The Sala Borgia, the ante-hall to the Sistina and Paolina

* Ariosto, Canto 33. † Vide Vasari.

‡ Marcello Venusti, of whose works I have seen little in England, was a native of Mantua, and, when a boy, only a colour-grinder to Perrin del Vaga, but his genius forced its way, in spite of all his master's efforts to depress it. He found a protector in Michael Angelo, and, by copying his designs, and receiving his instructions, caught so much of his spirit, as well as that of Raphael's, whose works he incessantly studied, that he is thought, by many critics, to have united much of the peculiar excellencies of both masters. Perrin del Vaga, the envious master of Marcello Venusti, was by far the most successful of Raphael's pupils in copying and imitating his works, although decidedly deficient to Giulio Romano in original genius.

Chapels, is painted with frescos, more remarkable for their subject than execution. They represent the Massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day, thus commemorated on papal walls, and by papal command, as a meritorious action! Times are changed. No Pope, I imagine, would venture now to give openly a sanction of approval to such a deed; nor, in fact, could any human being, I should hope, be found capable of planning or of perpetrating it. These are the days of political rather than of religious fanaticism.*

* Such was the case in 1820, when these letters were first published. But a lamentable change has since taken place—a retrograde movement in society, which may be dated from the "Emancipation" of the Roman Catholics. The mask has been at length thrown off; the spirit of bigotry and insolence has now manifested itself, and avowedly wants but the power to renew persecution in its most unrelenting form. See the recent charges, manifestoes, letters, &c., of the *soi-disant* Roman Catholic Primate of Ireland, and other heads of that church.

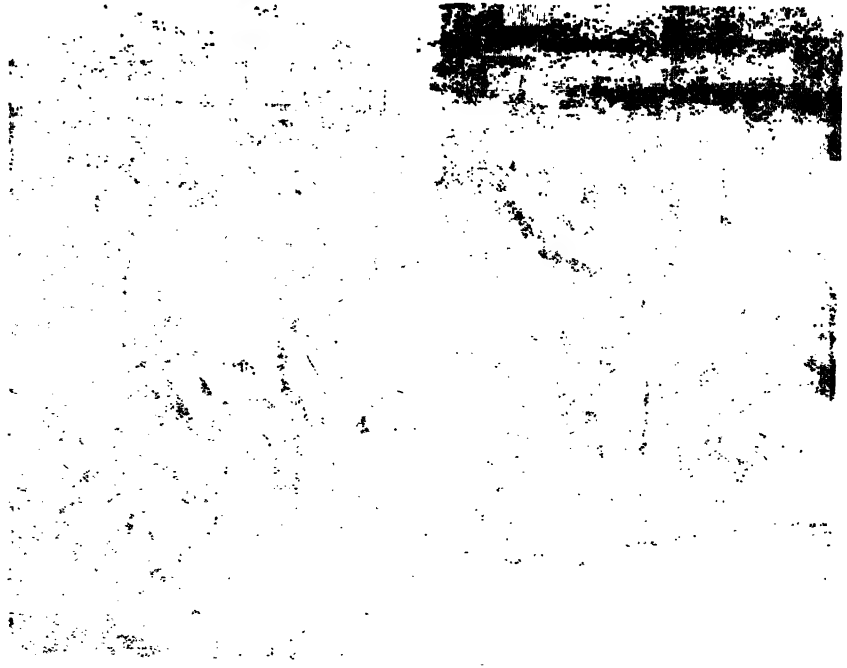
LETTER LVI.

The Camere of Raphael.

I think there is a character in Raphael which Buonarotti wants—a truth of expression, a soul-touching beauty, a sentiment, a majesty, which none but Raphael ever so eminently possessed, but which Buonarotti strikes me as being peculiarly deficient in.—We turn from his works with our understanding satisfied and instructed, but our soul unmoved. They only address themselves to the head, but Raphael's touch the heart. The former will only be admired by the learned, the latter will be felt by all.

It ought not to be forgotten, in estimating the performances of these two great men, that Michael Angelo lived more than two lifetimes of Raphael. What Raphael would have been, had he not been cut off in the very day-spring of his genius, we may with sorrow estimate, from the works which even at six-and-thirty he left to the world. He might be inferior to Buonarotti in learning—he might owe to *his* more advanced studies much of his grandeur of style—but he drew his perfection from himself. In the noble air of his heads, and the grand flow of his draperies, he is confessedly unrivalled—and in that touching beauty of expression—in that power which speaks from his works to the understanding and the heart—neither Buonarotti nor any human being ever approached him.

It is years since I saw the Cartoons, and still they are present to me. Even while I write, the image of Paul preaching at Athens, and that sublime head of Saint John in the death of Ananias, return upon my remembrance. What sentiment!—What soul!—What holiness!—What beauty! What must have been the mind of him who conceived it; and what an ineffaceable impression does it leave upon the heart!



LETTER LVI.

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PAUL PREACHING AT ATHENS.

To how few has been given that wondrous faculty of breathing into their works more than human beauty, sublimity, and grace—the power of surpassing nature, without departing from her laws, and creating by the conceptions of their own exalted minds, forms of unimagined *thinking* beauty!

On Raphael, and on the unknown author of the Apollo, this precious gift was bestowed; and the admiration of successive generations, the fruitless imitation of artists of every age and country, have made us feel "we shall never look upon their like again!"

One can never sufficiently regret that Raphael was tied down so continually to the sameness and senseless repetition of Madonnas and Holy Families. He knew, indeed, how to vary them—to give them that unparalleled grace, that tenderness of expression, and that soul-affecting beauty and divinity, which make us gaze upon them for ever with unsatiated delight. Still, if there be any feebleness of design in his works, it is in such as these. But it is in his great historical compositions, in the sublimity of the Transfiguration, the matchless Cartoons, and, more than all, the immortal frescos of the *Camere*, that we feel in all their force his transcendant powers; and these imperishable memorials will for ever consecrate his name.

Imperishable, did I say? Alas! while we gaze upon the mouldering frescos of the *Camere*, how do we mourn over the decay of works such as the world can see no more!

All that brutal injury, culpable neglect, and still more culpable restoration, could do to accelerate their destruction, has been added to the slow attacks of time. Scarcely ten years after they were painted, when Rome was taken by assault;* the licentious soldiers lived in these chambers, lighted their fires, in default of chimneys, on the stone floors, blackening the paintings with smoke, (which is far more destructive to frescos than to oil paintings,) and even wantonly injured and defaced many of the finest heads. These, Sebastian del Piombo was employed to restore; though a capital colourist, his powers were by no means equal to the task, and he executed it so ill, that Titian,

* A.D. 1528.

who afterwards visited these chambers with him, purposely asked him, if he knew who was the presumptuous and ignorant blockhead that had daubed over these noble heads? *

But the injuries that would have wholly ruined any other paintings, have scarcely thrown a cloud over these; and while the faintest outline remains, they must retain their pre-eminent superiority. But that superiority, in their present state, is by no means striking at the first glance. After all your high-raised expectations, you will walk through a set of cold, square, gloomy, unfurnished rooms, with some old, obscure, faded figures painted on the walls; and these are the Camere of Raphael? You will inquire, *Ubi est Raphael?* Your disappointment will have no bounds. But have patience—suspend your judgment—learn to look on them—and every fresh examination will reward you with the perception of new beauties, and a higher sense of their excellence.†

Every inch of the walls, from the ceiling to the floor, and the whole of the roofs, are covered with paintings. They are not, however, all done by his own hand—many of them, either entirely or in part, were executed by his principal pupils, under his eye, and from his designs. Such a number and variety, it may be supposed, are marked by varying degree of excellence; but Raphael's success seems to me to be always in exact proportion to the grandeur, the interest, and the difficulty of the subject.

By far the finest of these pieces, in my humble opinion, are the Burning of the Borgo San Spirito, the Liberation of St. Peter from Prison, and the School of Athens. In the first, which covers the whole side of a room, is represented the conflagration of a part of Rome, adjoining the Vatican, which happened in the pontificate of Leo IV.

The distraction of the mothers, and the poor little naked

* "Che fosse quel presuntuoso ed ignorante, che aveva embrattati que' volti?"—Lanzi, Storia Pittorica.

† Such is the gloominess of these chambers, and the obscurity of the paintings, that they never ought to be visited except early on a bright clear day. Even before two o'clock in winter, the light is lost for them.

children clinging to them; the red raging of the flames on the one hand, the terrified groups on the other—among which, the people, like true Italians, instead of taking measures to extinguish the fire, are falling on their knees to implore the mediation of the Pope, who appears, surrounded with priests, far in the distance, at a window in the palace, making the sign of the cross, by which the flames miraculously disappeared:—the woman with the bucket of water—the men escaping naked over the wall—all are admirable.

The most striking group is a family escaping from the fire; under which Raphael has introduced Æneas, bearing Anchises on his shoulders, and leading Ascanius in his hand, while Creusa follows at a little distance—for "the pious Æneas"—both in the poet's and the painter's representation of that event, whilst he took good care of himself, his father, and son, left his wife to shift for herself.

The powerless hanging limbs, and the helpless feebleness of the old man, are beautifully represented.

Every subordinate part is as perfect as the whole of this great composition, without attracting attention unduly. The very pavement of the street is inimitable.

This was the last, and perhaps the best of the frescos painted by Raphael himself. The ceiling of this room is painted by Pietro Perugino, whose works, from respect to his master, Raphael refused to efface.

In another painting in the same room—the Coronation of Charlemagne by Leo III., chiefly executed by Raphael's pupils, I was much struck with the beauty of the little page. There is a contrast, too, between the youth and smiling innocence of the boy, and the weight of cares and woes one attaches to the idea of the crown he bears, that perhaps adds to its effect. The head of one of the bishops too—but we should never finish, were I to enumerate the hundredth part of the beauties that delight me in these frescos.

The head of Charlemagne is the portrait of Francis I. of France, and that of Leo III. of Leo X.

The Justification and Purgation by oath of Charlemagne before Pope Leo and his Cardinals, over the window in this

chamber, and the Descent of the Saracens upon Ostia, are also painted from Raphael's designs, by his pupils. Not so the School of Athens, which was evidently the work of his own hands. I cannot find words sufficient to speak my admiration of this wonderful performance, which is, perhaps, the finest picture in the world, and one of the greatest and most perfect productions of mind. The skill of the composition—the art with which fifty-two figures, all nearly of equal importance, all philosophers, all in the same style of dress, are arranged in one piece, without monotony, crowding, or confusion—the character preserved in each, the interest given to a cold scholastic discussion—no praise can do it justice, and without seeing it you never can conceive its perfection.

On the steps of a Grecian portico, stand Aristotle and Plato engaged in argument, and each holding a volume in his hand. Their disciples are ranged around, attentively listening to them. Beneath is Diogenes—an inimitable figure—listlessly extended on the steps. On the left, at the top, is Socrates, earnestly talking to young Alcibiades, who listens in a lingering sort of attitude, as if half subdued by the wisdom of the sage—half willing to turn away from it; acknowledging inwardly the truth of his doctrines—yet still resolved to give the reins to pleasure, and run the career of gay enjoyment. I know not, however, why the young Grecian was not made more handsome. The old man beside him, with a cap on, listening to Socrates, is inimitable. Another looking over the shoulder of Pythagoras, who is writing his works, is, if possible, still finer. The figure, in deep abstracted thought, leaning on his elbow, with a pen on his hand; Zoroaster holding a globe; Archimedes (which, it is said, is the portrait of Raphael's uncle, Bramante, the architect,) stooping to trace a geometrical figure, with compasses, on a slate on the ground, and the whole group that surrounds him, are beyond all praise. In the corner on the right, the figure with a black cap is the portrait of Raphael himself, and that beside him, of Pietro Perugino. Several other figures are said to be likenesses of his contemporaries. But whatever were the features he copied, he has given them that character and expression

which exactly suited his subject, together with the very truth of nature itself.

With grief do I say, that this inestimable work has suffered still more than the rest, and I even fancy that since I first saw it, now nearly two years, some of the heads are more defaced.

Opposite is the Dispute upon the Sacrament, the first of these frescos which Raphael painted. Surrounding the altar appear the four Doctors of the Roman Church, *attended* by the Apostles and Blessed Saints, in high dispute; and above their heads are seen in air the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost,—with the Virgin Mary, and John the Baptist.

Above the window in this room, is painted, by Raphael himself, Apollo, on mount Parnassus, encircled by the Muses, and playing on the violin—I could have wished it had been the lyre, especially since we were to see, not to hear it. The whole group is beautiful, and the figure of Sappho, reclining below, peculiarly so. Homer, Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Dante, and many other great poets, appear in the sacred choir. I had repeatedly passed many hours in gazing at the walls in this room, before I thought of looking at the ceiling, which is painted by Raphael himself. The figures of Philosophy, Poetry, Theology, and Justice; and the pictures of Adam and Eve, of the Judgment of Solomon, and of Marsyas and Apollo, amply repay the fatigue of contemplating them, which, from their position and obscurity, is not small.

The ceiling in the next chamber is painted in chiaro oscuro by Raphael, and all the four paintings on the walls are executed by himself. They consist, first, of the Miracle of Bolsena—in which the Real Presence appears in the eucharist, for the conversion of the unbelieving priest, who is administering the sacrament, and who looks sufficiently scared at this literal manifestation of the truth of transubstantiation. The next painting represents a miracle of somewhat more importance, and doubtless of equal authenticity. It is the meeting of Attila and his victorious army on their progress to Rome, by St. Leo I., attended by his train of priests on the earth, and by the Apostles St. Peter

and St. Paul in the sky,—an apparition which immediately frightened all the Huns back again. The figure of Attila is very fine. Pope Leo I. is the portrait of Leo X., who was Pope when this fresco was painted.

The Liberation of St. Peter from prison is one of the finest paintings genius ever produced; but such is its wretched situation, immediately above the great gothic window which cuts into it, that its effect is, in a great degree, lost, both from the bad light and the uncouth awkwardness of its form.

This wall has been the bed of Procrustes, on which the productions of genius have been stretched out or compressed. As it is, this may perhaps be considered three paintings, rather than one. In the centre, through the grated window of the dungeon, is seen St. Peter in chains, and the angel appearing to him, and commanding him to rise. The transcendent glory that surrounds the head of the celestial visitor, forms the sole light of the piece. Again, on the right, at the prison doors, the angel appears leading forth the apostle. Their figures, in both repetitions, are wonderfully fine. On the left, (at the other side of the window,) are two soldiers, hastily descending the steps leading from the dungeon, in consternation and alarm; the moon shining bright on their glittering armour, and shielding their eyes from the sudden blinding glare of the torch held by their comrade at the foot of the stair, which falls full on the face of another soldier, awakening from sleep—admirably expressed! But vain is all description—vain would be all imitation. The very mechanism of this wonderful picture—the variety of lights, the moonlight shining on the distant country, and on the soldiers' arms; the torch gleaming on their faces; and the two celestial lights emanating from the presence of the angel,—are alone, in their management and effect, a prodigy of skill and science.

We now turn to the last of the four paintings in this chamber, the Expulsion of Heliodorus from the Temple by Angels. The history is related in Maccabees. When attempting to seize "the money laid up here for the fatherless and widows, an apparition appeared—a horse with a terrible rider, adorned with a very fair covering, and he ran

fiercely and smote Heliodorus, and two young men, notable in strength, excellent in beauty, and comely in apparel, who scourged him continually." *

Nothing can exceed the rushing of the attack—the rapidity of the onset—the magic that makes the action seem to go on before your eyes.

The superhuman force and activity of the vengeful messengers, strike you with awe; but there is no exaggeration, no violence, no overstraining. Pope Julius II. insisted upon being brought into this scene, though it happened at least eighteen hundred years before he was born. So Raphael was obliged to introduce him, and he appears at the corner, borne in on his chair of state. Raphael has certainly done this group, (which, of itself, is a masterpiece of painting,) the honour of painting it with his own hand, but I doubt the executive part of the *whole* of the rest of the picture being his, though it is generally reputed so.

In the fourth and last chamber, none of the paintings are executed by Raphael, excepting the figures of Justice and Mercy, painted in oils by himself; and, according to some accounts, the last works of his hand. That grand painting, the battle between Constantine and Maxentius, at the Ponte Molle, near Rome, designed by Raphael, and painted after his death by Giulio Romano, is worthy alike of the master and the scholar. The colouring, indeed, has the faults of his great pupil,—too much of that red hue, that opaque brickiness, that general diffusion of lights, and want of chiaro oscuro, that we see in his works; but it is given with all his characteristic spirit and energy.

In this grand composition, Raphael has successfully triumphed over all the confessed difficulties of the subject. It has all the action and hurry and movement of a battle, without the smallest confusion. At one glance you see the whole. The figure of Constantine, riding over the field on his milk-white charger, at once catches your eye. Victory sits on his crowned and lofty front, while the defeated usurper, sinking in the stream, grappling, in his last convulsive agonies, with instinctive desperation, the bridle of

* II. Maccabees, chap. iii.

his spent and panting steed, forces you, shuddering, to gaze upon its horrors.

In this room, and painted also by Giulio Romano, is the apparition of the Fiery Cross in the Heavens, which Constantine witnessed previous to the battle. Though excellent in itself, it is inferior to the battle. The rest of the paintings in this room are executed by other pupils of Raphael, from his designs; none, excepting the corner figures of the eight Popes, being by Giulio Romano. The roof of this chamber was painted by an inferior artist many years afterwards, and not from the designs of Raphael.

It may possibly interest you to know the order in which Raphael painted his frescos. It was as follows:—

1. The Dispute upon the Sacrament, intended to exemplify Theology.

2. Jurisprudence,—exemplified on one side by the Emperor Justinian, who receives the Code of Laws from Trebonian; and the other by Gregory IX., who delivers the Decretals to a member of the Consistory,—painted above the windows of the same Camera.

3. Mount Parnassus, with Apollo and the Muses, representing Poetry.

4. The School of Athens, representing Philosophy. After finishing this great work, Raphael painted the Prophet Isaiah, in the Augustine Church, and the Sibyls in Sta. Maria della Pace. He then painted,

5. The Miracle at Bolsena, of the Real Presence in the eucharist.

6. Heliodorus expelled from the Temple by the Angels. After this, he painted the Cartoons for the Flemish Tapestry; seven of which we have in England. Then returning to the Vatican, he successively executed,

7. The Liberation of St. Peter from prison by the Angels.

8. Attila arrested in his progress to Rome by St. Leo, with the apparition of St. Peter and St. Paul in the sky.

9, The Burning of the Borgo San Spirito.

I have passed over almost without notice, many of the frescos, which I have spent hours, and I might add days, in studying and admiring, from the wish not to swell this

letter with vain and tedious descriptions. It is not for me to attempt to praise the last and best works of this greatest of painters. Little as, perhaps, I am able to estimate all their merit and science, I have felt their perfection, and drawn from their study a delight which words can never describe. It is impossible, indeed, to see works such as these, without feeling the mind enlarged, and conscious of higher ideas of beauty, of perfection, of moral dignity and power. That I have seen them—that their image is indelibly engraved upon my mind—will be, through life, a source of unalienable pleasure to me; nor would I part with their very remembrance, for much that this world could bestow.

LETTER LVII.

The Loggie of Raphael—The Paintings in the Vatican.

I have but a few words to say on the *Loggie* of Raphael; for, besides that enough has already been said and written upon them—that they are decidedly inferior to the inimitable frescos of the Camere, painted at a much earlier period, and for the most part executed from his designs by his pupils—to enter into them at all, would require a minuteness of detail that would be perfectly intolerable.

The first story consists merely of ornamental paintings of treillage, shells, flowers, &c., which merit little notice. The second comprises that series of pictures, from the creation of the world to the crucifixion of our Saviour, which has sometimes been called Raphael's Bible. These paintings are on a very small scale. Each arcade, or *loggia*, or space between two pillars, contains four, on the four sides of its covered roof.

The first of these, which represents God the Father, in the void of chaos, calling forth the world and the deep, is unquestionably the work of Raphael's own hand, and is prodigiously extolled by connoisseurs. Michael Angelo himself must have been struck with its sublimity, for he exclaimed, that Raphael could never have painted it had he not seen his own figure of the Eternal Father on the roof of the Sistine Chapel, from which, at his desire, Raphael had been jealously excluded. No one, however, but his rival, will charge Raphael with this petty pilfering. The work is his own, whatever be its merits or defects. For my own part, I confess, that I do not see in this, or in any of the paintings of the *Loggie*, that greatness of style, that elevation of thought, and wondrous beauty of expression, that characterise his later and better works; nay, more, that this

figure of the Supreme Being, sprawling about, with his arms and legs extended in every opposite direction, so far from striking me with its sublimity, was so inexpressibly shocking to me, that I turned from it with disgust.

The quadruple image of the Almighty fills the four compartments of this first *Loggia*. In one of these, painted by Giulio Romano, he is represented with the sun in one hand and the moon in the other, kicking the earth to its place with his feet.

Not even Raphael's pencil can reconcile me to any representation of the Deity. Numa forbade the Romans to represent the Divinity under a human form. It would have been well had Christians observed the same respect.

The Baptism of Christ, which is, I believe, almost the only other picture of the *Loggie* executed by the hand of Raphael himself, I admired the most of any. But the examination of them is so peculiarly fatiguing, from their number, and from the position into which it throws the head, that I have not studied them with the attention they deserve. On the whole, however, good engravings will give give you a far better idea of the *Loggie*, than of most paintings, for their chief merit consists in their design and composition; the colouring is now much injured by time and exposure to the atmosphere.

The gallery of oil paintings in the Vatican, in the Borghese Chambers, contains the two finest pictures in the world—The Transfiguration of Raphael, and the Communion of St. Jerome of Domenichino. It is the fashion, I believe, in consequence of Madame de Stael's commendation, to give the preference to the latter. The fact is, that Raphael is the first, and Domenichino the second, painter in the world—and these are their master-pieces. But we must not estimate the merits of the masters from these works. The Communion of St. Jerome equals, if not surpasses, any of Domenichino's frescos:—the Transfiguration does not approach to those of Raphael. The Transfiguration, too, has suffered more from time, injury, and, above all, restoration, and it is only to the eye that has the true feeling for the highest species of perfection, that its superiority will be manifest. The beauties of the Communion,

which is in far finer preservation, are much more palpable—the action is one, simple and clear—and it is consequently as much admired at the first sight as the last. But the Transfiguration will be far more admired the hundredth time than the first. It is, besides, infinitely more difficult. Many painters might have made a fine Communion of St. Jerome, but who but Raphael could have painted the Transfiguration!

The glorified—the super-human figure of our Saviour transfigured in the clouds, is an attempt the most difficult, I had almost said presumptuous, that was ever made in painting—and, at the same time, perhaps the most successful. It is, indeed, the triumph of genius. I have never seen it without the vain wish that it could be divested of Moses and Elisha, on each side; but the truth of gospel history condemned Raphael to this. Look at the Transfiguration of our Saviour alone, without these accompanying prophets, and you will better judge of its wonderful perfection.

It is somewhat strange to see the whole picture of the Transfiguration—including the three apostles, prostrate on the mount, shading their dazzled senses from the insufferable brightness—occupying only a small part of the top of the canvas—and the principal field filled with a totally distinct, and certainly unequalled, picture—that of the demoniac boy, whom our Saviour cured on coming down from the mount, after his transfiguration. This was done in compliance with the *orders* of the monks of St. Pietro in Montorio, for whose church it was painted. It was the universal custom of the age—the yet unbanished taste of Gothic days—to have two pictures, a celestial and a terrestrial one, wholly unconnected with each other; accordingly we see few, even of the finest paintings, in which there is not a heavenly subject above and an earthly one below—for the great masters of that day, like our own Shakspeare, were compelled to suit their works to the taste of their employers.

Domenichino lived in an age which had shaken off many barbarisms—his angels are connected with the picture, and look down upon the dying saint, whose failing, trembling

limbs are supported, kneeling, in life's last moments, to receive the cup of Christ—with looks of such holy love and rapture, that we could not wish them away. I do not think the Communion of St. Jerome equal to the Transfiguration—it is a work of less science, less difficulty, less complication, and less power; but I do think it the second painting in the world, and perhaps the Murder of Peter the Martyr is the third.*

Certainly, the unrivalled superiority of the great masters of art cannot with justice be ascribed to the patronage they met with. Domenichino received fifty Roman crowns—about twelve guineas—for his Communion of St. Jerome!

The colouring of that great masterpiece, the Madonna del Foligno, in this collection, is the finest, perhaps because the least injured, of Raphael's works. It may vie with Titian. It has suffered in some degree from French restoration, but nothing compared with the Transfiguration.

Guido's Fortune, one of his beautiful poetical thoughts, is enchanting. You long to detain her, but it is vain. She eludes your grasp, and poor little Cupid, who is pursuing her through the ambient air, you see will be left in the lurch. A sentimentalist might say, that Love seldom lays hold of Fortune. But what shall we say to Love pursuing Fortune so eagerly? That it is in life as in the picture! I have seen some duplicates, and many copies of this beautiful work, in various parts of the world, but this is by far the finest.

Andrea Sacchi's Dream of St. Bruno, is his masterpiece.

This saint, the founder of the Carthusian Order, had, it seems, a dream, in which he saw a number of monks, in long white flannel gowns, go up the steeps of the Apennines; in consequence of which the order was founded, and *Certosa* convents built all over Italy; and as painters in those days had no choice as to their subjects, and were obliged to paint what piety rather than taste, dictated—Andrea was ordered to paint this dream. There could not well be a more unpromising subject; and it is wonderful, that with all its disadvantages,—the want of action or

* The masterpiece of Titian, at Venice.

interest, the uniform white figures, dressed in garments of the same hue and form, and ranged in a long row,—he could produce such a capital picture as this.

Guercino's Santa Petronilla * is a work of great power and science, and is justly considered one of the first masterpieces of this great artist. His Incredulity of St. Thomas is very fine, and has all the breadth and force of effect, without exaggeration, for which his works are so conspicuous. His models are said to have been the heads of peasants; but, at least, there is nothing low or ignoble in them. In Caravaggio we see both. We may turn to his Deposition from the Cross, fine as it is, in proof of it. He never painted anything without vulgarity—nor yet anything without forcing us to admire it.

Titian's Martyrdom of St. Sebastian has been quite as much commended as it deserves. The colouring of the saint, indeed, is beyond all praise. It lives and breathes. But this very animation disunites it from the rest. It seems a real figure among painted ones. It attracts the eye entirely to itself, and by no means pleases it; for it is ill drawn—absolutely mis-shapen. His model has been bad, and he has copied it as closely in the form as in the colouring. The expression of St. Catherine is fine; but, on the whole, the composition is but poor.

Barocci's Annunciation is esteemed his *capo d'opera*. In my humble opinion, he never produced any capo d'opera at all. I have never been able to admire sufficiently the peach-blossom colouring of this most affected and *maniéré* painter; but the generality of connoisseurs call it very fine.

I have passed over the most part of the paintings at the Vatican. Though not very numerous, they are all very fine, with not more than one or two exceptions. But I know how tiresome all descriptions of paintings are, and how often these have been described; and, therefore, I abstain even from mentioning them.

I could wish they were in better lighted rooms, and

* After these Letters were written, this admirable painting was removed to the Museum of the Capitol, and placed in a much better light and situation.

should not be sorry that they had frames; but chiefly, I wish that the whole tribe of copyists, with all their lumber, was kicked out. Both here, and in the Camere of Raphael, their huge pictures and scaffolds block up one's view of the originals. Copying is an unfailing trade at Rome. Numbers live upon Raphael alone; and it is amazing how well these gentlemen often seem to be satisfied with their own works. "*Non è cattiva,*" (which, in Italian acceptation, means very good indeed,) observed one, after comparing his own daub with the Transfiguration. Another subscribed to the compliment of a judicious friend, that his copy from one of the frescos was *tale quale* with the original. And yet it was an artist of rather more fame, who, in former times, after repeated attempts to copy one head from the School of Athens, threw away his pencil in despair, declaring it was impossible.

I am now, once more, at the very entrance of the noble galleries and halls, which form the Vatican Museum of Sculpture—and yet I must not enter it. 'Tis true, I have given you only a hasty and imperfect sketch of my first visit to the place where I have spent so many delightful hours, or rather days; but to describe it at all, I must write volumes, and I therefore forbear. Nor will I say anything of our visit to it by torchlight, except that the masterpieces of sculpture, in general, certainly appeared to far greater advantage, and the inferior ones to less. You cannot be said to see the Torso at all, if you only view it by day-light. Much depends upon the manner in which the torch is held. In some lights even the Laocoon looked ill, though, in the proper situation, it was beyond expression fine. The Apollo requires to have the torch held behind it.

Nobody ever goes to see the Museum of the Capitol by torch-light, though everybody makes a point of visiting the Vatican; and yet, I daresay, the Dying Gladiator would have as fine an effect, tried by this test of sculpture, as the Apollo and the Laocoon. But I believe I have never given you any account of the noble Museum of the Capitol at all. I will, therefore, do it in my next letter. Few cities can boast even of one fine museum of sculpture; but Rome has three—the Vatican, the Capitol, and the Villa Albani.

LETTER LVIII.

Museum of the Capitol.

A succession of profound critics, among whom is the celebrated Winkelman, have written most voluminously on the Museum of the Capitol. But this very redundancy of description annuls itself. Few will explore nine or ten folio volumes, but all must wish for some account of one of the finest collections of ancient sculpture in the world. There is, however, no medium between a little dry two-penny catalogue, and these ponderous tomes; and, though far be from me the presumptuous thought of supplying the deficiency, I will, as I hastily lead you through the noble halls and galleries of the Capitol, point out, on the way, a few of the most remarkable of its varied works of ancient art and genius.

You enter the court, and discover, in the opposite recess, the figure of Ocean, reclining, not upon his own vast plains of water, but upon a little bubbling fountain. This briny god was the ancient respondent of Pasquin, and, if report says true, infused much attic salt into his pleasant replies. According to some authorities, he is the Rhine; but be this as it may, this hoary father of the flood is universally called *Marforio*, from having been found in the Via Marforio, the name of which has obviously been corrupted from the ancient Forum of Mars. Near it are two satyrs, as Caryatides; three consular fasces (on the left wall), and two Pagan sarcophagi, found in the catacombs (that receptacle only of Christian martyrs), on one of which is inscribed the portrait and name of the Pagan Roman whose remains it contained. The Genius of Plenty, with the horn at its feet; marine monsters; the chase of the wild boar and the stag; and such heathen devices, adorn these urns.

On the centre of the portico of the court, two long, lank,

colossal, and truly Egyptian figures of Isis, stare you in the face. One of basalt has the *modium* on its head, which is covered with hieroglyphics, as well as its shapeless back. The other, which is of red granite, has the lotus flower on its brow, and three figures of the Ibis, the sacred bird of the Nile, on its back.

The best statue I saw in this portico, was Diana looking after the arrow she had just thrown. The spirit and attitude of the figure are very fine. It expresses all the life and freedom of the huntress of the woods. The drapery, blown by the wind, displays to great advantage the beautiful buskined leg. Diana's petticoats, I must beg to observe, are always tucked up; so that, you see, the Scotch fashion of the women kilting, is quite classical.

At the extremity of this little portico is a pedestal, on which is sculptured, in relievo, the bound and captive personification of the province of Dacia, known by the axe she bears. Beside it stands a fine fragment in *pavonazetto* marble, of one of the statues of the captive Dacian kings, that once adorned Trajan's Arch of Triumph. It was removed by Constantine to his own arch, and from thence, by one of the Popes, here. The full trousers of those captive kings are exactly the Turkish dress of the present day—so long do modes continue. There is also a still finer fragment—the leg of a Hercules trampling upon the Hydra. The rude sculpture of the Wolf and the Twins, found at Albano, seems to prove its antiquity, although we can scarcely admit its claims to have adorned Alba Longa. Adrian, as Pontifex Maximus, is sacrificing, with the head uncovered—which, therefore, must have been to Saturn, for to every other deity the priest was veiled.

The restorers have made fine work here. You will see Polyphemus, notwithstanding his eye over his nose, transformed into Pan—Muses and Geniuses, which have become celestial since their mutilation—one figure, by the help of a cornucopia, transformed into Plenty, and another dubbed an Immortality.

A warrior in complete armour and a long beard, usually called Mars, is also called Pyrrhus, who, as well as all the Greeks of his day, it is well known, used to shave himself.

Winkelman, having assigned this reason why it cannot be Pyrrhus, very sagaciously conjectures that it is either Jupiter or Agamemnon.* Now, though it is certain that the Greeks did not begin to shave till the age of Pericles, and that Jupiter never was known to shave at all, the assumption that it is either the king of the gods, or the "king of men," is purely gratuitous. It *may* just as well represent an ancient Roman, as a Greek hero, for they also wore beards.† It is gravely related in history, that in the year of Rome 454, barbers first came from Sicily to Rome, and first began to shave the Romans.‡ Caligula used to wear a *golden beard* fixed to his chin.§ Hadrian, on account of a blemish, allowed his beard to grow, and afterwards beards grew common. This colossal statue is, however, at all events, extremely interesting, from the minute details of the martial accoutrements it bears. The weight of the *lorica*, compressing the thick folds of the tunic, looks as if the man encased in it could never have moved, much less fought. It reminds one of the heavy coat of mail described by Virgil, that two servants could scarcely hold, though, under it, the swift Grecian did such execution—

> "Levibus huic hamis consertam auroque trilicem,
> Loricam,
> * * * * *
> Vix illam famuli, Phegeus, Sagarisque, ferebant
> Multiplicem, connixi humeris: indutus at olim
> Demoleos cursu palantes Troas agebat."
>
> *Æn.* v. 268

A whole room is filled with Egyptian sculpture, brought from the Egyptian Temple, or Canopus, of Adrian's Villa.

* Hist. de l'Art, liv. vii. chap. 4. § 19.

† In seasons of deep affliction, the Romans at all periods frequently used to allow their beards to grow. Thus bearded statues may represent a Roman in any age, mourning the loss of friends or the reverses of fortune. A bearded head of Augustus on a fine cameo, noticed by Winkelman, lib. vi. cap 6. § 7. is supposed to represent him in grief for the defeat of Varus and the three legions.

‡ Plutarch's Life of Camillus.

§ Suet. Calig. 52.

Canopus himself, the Egyptian Neptune,* has the lotus flower on his little head—and is of black basalt.

In this room, all the sculptures in basalt are ancient Egyptian. The rest, in *nero antico* marble, which look, from their beauty and dazzling polish, as if fresh from the artist's hand, are of the age of Hadrian. Of the latter class, are the beautiful conjoined heads of the Sun and Moon, or Osiris under the form of Apis and Isis; and both are exquisitely finished. The hawk-headed divinity, the tutelar or guardian god we see so constantly on the hieroglyphical monuments of the Egyptians, whether in painting or sculpture—on their mummies or their statues—is also supposed to be Osiris† represented with a hawk's head, from the supposed power of the hawk's eye to fix its gaze upon the sun; in consequence of which, even among the Greeks, the hawk was sacred to Phœbus.‡ Serapis, whose image is also here, was undoubtedly the true Serapis, the Egyptian Pluto. This statue was first imported into Egypt from Sinope, in Pontus, in consequence of a vision of one of the Ptolomies.§ His worship was not received in Rome till the reign of Antoninus Pius. He bears the modius on his head, as an emblem of fecundity. Here is an Isis, with a wig of peacock's feathers, which also bears the modius on its head. Anubis, the Egyptian Mercury, with his canine head, is the only deity in white marble. He bears both the cistrum and the caduceus, and is also of Hadrian's age. Certainly these works are greatly relieved from the straight, stretched-out, perpendicular rigidity, of the true Egyptian sculpture.

* Canopus, which was the name of one of the mouths of the Nile, was, in fact, nothing but the vase, in which its waters, at the annual inundation, were carried in the religious rites. But from the propensity of the Egyptians to deify everything, it was worshipped as a god of great importance, and had a beautiful little human face, which surmounted the vase. It does not appear to have been of very high antiquity; for, if we may believe history, this mouth of the Nile itself received its name from Canopus, a Spartan pilot, who was buried on the spot at the time when Menelaus was driven on the coast, and in memory of whom a city was built.—Tacitus, Ann. lib. ii. cap. 60.

† Kircher, tom. iii. 501. ‡ Odyss. v. 525.

§ Vide Tacitus, Hist. lib. iv. cap. 83, 84. Civ. Div. 2. 59.—Pausanias, lib. i. cap. 18. lib. ii. cap. 34.

That people seemed to have much resemblance to the Chinese in their works, and much of their stationary and unprogressive character. They made no advances in art; and, indeed, where anatomy was a subject of religious mystery, and an incision made into a dead body accounted worse than murder—excellence in the representation of the human form was manifestly unattainable.* It always seemed to be their aim, to make men as much as possible like mummies. Their images—for I cannot call them statues—had never any principle of life; far less did they bear any approach to freedom, or grace, or expression, or momentary action. Their stiff, upright figures, their long baboon arms, hanging close to their sides; their large flat feet, their mute insensible faces, their unformed limbs, destitute of all articulation of joints and muscles, remind one rather of the first rude attempts at sculpture than of its finished state.

The Egyptians might give the art of sculpture to the Greeks, but theirs was only the lifeless figure of clay. It was the Greeks who struck the Promethean spark that gave it life.

During the enlightened reigns of the Ptolemies, however, Alexandria rivalled Athens, and the artists even of Greece received in their courts that asylum and patronage, which their own exhausted and oppressed country could no longer afford.

Beyond the Egyptian room, is a chamber filled with inscriptions, embracing the whole period of the Roman empire, from Augustus to Theodosius. Here stands the Columna Milliarium, an ancient Roman marble mile-stone, with two inscriptions, one in Latin, the other in Greek. A pedestal, of the finest style of Greek sculpture, represents the labours of Hercules; and, on the sepulchral cippus, and also on a column, I observed all the ancient instruments used in architecture, and in mensuration—the trowel, the hammer,

* Vide Winkelman, Histoire de l'Art, liv. ii. cap. i. § 9, who quotes Diod. Siculus, l. i. § 91. The embalming of the dead among the Egyptians was intrusted to one family, and transmitted from father to to son. It is related, that these operators, after having finished their work, were generally obliged to run away, from the childish rage of the relations at the necessary incisions that had been made for this purpose in the corpse of the deceased.

the compasses, the plummet, and the quadrant, &c. exactly such as we use at the present day.

The last room contains the great marble sarcophagus, in which was found the Barberini—or the Portland Vase*, as it was called from its possessor, the Duke of Portland. The subject represented on that exquisitely beautiful vase, which has excited so much speculation, is supposed, by the best critics, to be the story of Peleus and Thetis, who metamorphosed herself into a serpent to escape the pursuit of her lover.

The sarcophagus itself, from two figures, of bad sculpture, at the top, has been called the tomb of Alexander Severus, and Mammea, his mother. But Winkelman observes, that as the man represented here is at least fifty, and Alexander Severus was murdered before he was thirty, this is impossible. It is more reasonably supposed to be the tomb of the parents of Alexander Severus. The bassi rilievi, on the four sides, are of varying degrees of excellence. The front, which is very fine, represents the contest between Achilles and Agamemnon at the departure of Chryseis for Briseis. The trembling maid, the assembled Greeks, the noble figures, the contending passions expressed by their action, and, above all, the transport of Achilles, whose uplifted arm is withheld by Minerva, are admirably sculptured.

On the side next the window, the fair captive is leaving the tent with the heralds. The sculptor has aimed at giving even a stronger interest to this parting scene than the poet, who describes her,

> "Oft looking back, slow moving o'er the strand,'

by the expression of longing regret which she throws upon her departing lover, whose horse is held by his attendants.

The third side, which represents the Greeks supplicating Achilles to revenge the death of Patroclus, is of very inferior sculpture; and the fourth—the principal actions of Achilles—is apparently the work of a barbarous age.

In this apartment there is a very curious inscription in

* It was placed in the British Museum, where it was wantonly destroyed by a visitor, who dashed it to pieces, some years after this work was first published.

the Palmyrean language, the only one I ever met with; many of the letters are unknown.

While my companions were admiring an ancient mosaic, representing Love conquering Force, or little Loves mounted on the subdued Lion, I was much amused with a curious basso relievo of one of the Galli, Cybele's vagabond priests, (supposed to be the Archigallus,) in full costume, and surrounded with all the symbols of her worship.

While examining them, I could not refrain from speculating upon what had become of the sacred simulacrum of Cybele, which the Romans having obtained by humble supplication, transported by solemn embassy from Phrygia to Rome. In the early ages of Greece, not only Cybele, but all its deities—Bacchus, Venus,* Cupid, and even the Graces themselves, were represented and worshipped under the forms of shapeless masses of stone. The combined figure in the Zodiac, which still designates Castor and Pollux, shows that they were anciently adored under the form of two parallel sticks connected together.† What strikes me with admiration in this is, that in the very infancy of society, while the arts were unequal even to the rudest imitation of the human form, such abstract and poetic ideas as those of Beauty, of Love, of Grace, of that devoted affection which could make an immortal resign immortality, or share it with the being he loved ‡—of "the Common Mother," of man, and of creation,—should ever have been conceived at all—much less generally adopted and worshipped. The origin of the Grecian mythology, its high antiquity, and the complicated and refined ideas it involves, considered in a philosophical light, would form a very interesting subject of inquiry. But to proceed on our way through the Museum of the Capitol.

On the staircase, are the twenty-six fragments of the ancient plan of Rome, which formed the pavement of the Temple of Romulus and Remus, or the Church of S. S. Cosmo and Damiano. Half way up, is one of those numerous statues, generally called Modesty—the head veiled, and

* See the description in Tacitus of the Paphian Venus.

† Winkelman, Hist. de l'Art, liv. i. ‡ Pollux.

the figure enveloped, but not concealed, in the thin, transparent, clinging drapery. They used to go by the name of vestals, and are now supposed, like all veiled statues, to be sepulchral figures.

In the gallery, you will stop to admire the striking, but disgusting figure of an old, drunken, screaming Bacchante, grasping with both hands a skin of wine; the deep despair of the abandoned Psyche; one of the finest of the daughters of Niobe; the torso of a Discobolus, restored as a falling Gladiator; the head of Jupiter Ammon; the sarcophagus, with the bas relief of the Rape of Proserpine; but more particularly, the infant Hercules strangling, without an effort, the serpents—which has always seemed to me a beautiful allegory of Innocence destroying Evil.

Here we have the bust of Scipio Africanus—of whom I have seen at least six heads, differing from each other in everything but ugliness; for every bust marked with a scar is invariably called the bust of Scipio; but as this is inscribed with his name, and resembles the bust of green basalt of the Palazzo Rospigliosi, which was found in the ruins of Linternum, we may contemplate it with the hope, at least, that we really behold the portrait of that truly great Roman.

Here, too, we have a bust of Brutus—though he who had dared to preserve the head of the assassin of Cæsar, would probably not long have retained his own on his shoulders; another of Pompey may be genuine, though his nose is somewhat apocryphal;* a third is called Cato the Censor, though we have not even tradition to help us to his physiognomy—and many more of the famous heroes of the Republic, which nothing could prevent us from contemplating with the deepest interest, except the conviction that they are all impostors.† But the fine colossal bust of Marcus Agrippa is both beautiful and authentic. Here,

* I mean compared with the medal, the impression of which may be seen in Maffei Rac. di Stat. tav. 127. Neither does it bear the smallest resemblance to the statue at the Palazzo Spada.

† Once for all, I must notice the mortifying truth, that, with scarce an exception, there is no authority for any head of Republican date. Pompey,—and even he is dubious.—as far as I remember, is the sole.

too, is a bust you would, perhaps, hardly expect to see, that of Cecrops, King of Athens!

I observed a sarcophagus, the sides of which are sculptured with the education of Bacchus, and his first adoration, after having planted the vine; and in the centre, a most curious representation of a sport celebrated in his honour, in which a party of men are jumping upon a skin, swelled out with wine, and well oiled; while old Silenus is laughing at an unlucky wight who is sprawling on the ground.

On a votive altar, of vile sculpture, which now serves for a pedestial to a statue of Jove, you see the Vestal Claudia, drawing after her the vessel containing the simulacrum of Cybele.

Two rooms on the right of the gallery, contain a most entertaining variety of inscriptions, marbles, bronzes, vases, &c. &c. Of these I shall mention very few; but I cannot altogether pass over a beautiful bronze vase, found in the sea at Antium, which, as the inscription upon it proves, was given by Mithridates, King of Pontus, to the College of Gymnasiarchs. There is also a noble Greek marble vase, which gives to the room its title of Stanza del Vaso, encircled with its sculptured foliage of vines, which was found among the ruined tombs of the Via Appia—as if the spirits of the ancient Romans had been quaffing nectar from its brim. It is placed upon a marble pedestal, sculptured with the twelve great gods—a work which Winkelman enumerates among the very few undoubted monuments of Etruscan art. He remarks, that Vulcan, who appears young, and without a beard, is armed with a hatchet, with which he is preparing to cleave Jupiter's skull, in order to help Minerva out; exactly as the birth of Minerva is represented on the Etruscan pateras. But in those Jupiter is always sitting; here he is standing: nor could I trace any design of breaking his head on the part of Vulcan: not to mention that it seems wholly unnecessary, as Minerva is already out, and appears on her legs in this procession of deities. This curious piece of ancient sculpture has apparently served as the mouth of a well, for the marks, worn by the cords, are still distinctly visible. Thus, the ancients, with true refinement and taste, carried the embellishment of the Fine Arts

even to the humblest conveniences of domestic life. The meanest utensil was elegant in its form—the poorest garment graceful in its folds and drapery—and the prodigality of painting and sculpture, with which not only their streets and public buildings, but their private habitations were adorned, may well raise our wonder and our shame. Nor were they confined to patrician wealth. The humble dwellings of an obscure little country sea-port, such as Herculaneum or Pompeii, were adorned with paintings of exquisite beauty, and filled with statues which must be for ever the admiration of every country and every age; while, in London itself, the modern metropolis of the world, overflowing with wealth and luxury, scarcely one of the private houses of its wealthy citizens can boast a single piece of sculpture. However opulent, however prodigal, however luxurious, it is rarely on works of art that Englishmen lavish their wealth. Nor is it their cost that renders them now unattainable; for, strange as the fact may seem, ancient sculpture actually bore a higher price among the ancients themselves, than it does even in the present day.* Yet, notwithstanding the extravagant price of statues in ancient times, we hear of one hundred and sixty different statues of bronze being erected in one year to one man † at Athens.

But to return from Athens, whither this long digression has carried us, to the Museum of the Capitol—I must not pass unnoticed the famous Iliac table. A jovial priest, who was out hunting, found it on the Appian Way, at a place called *Alle Frattochie*,‡ where, it is believed, the Emperor Claudius had a villa, and this remarkable bas relief is supposed to be a work of his reign.§ It is only a small square slab of marble, though it has made so much noise in the world; and upon it are sculptured the principal actions of the Iliad, with an explanatory inscription in Greek, which has been so often translated and commented upon, that it is

* Hist. de l'Art, liv. iv. 7, § 51.

† Demetrius of Phalerias. Vide Pliny, l. xxxiv. cap. 6.

‡ Formerly Bovillæ, where the murder of Clodius by Milo is supposed to have happened.

§ Winkelman, Hist. de l'Art, liv. iv. chap. 2. The engraving and full explanation will be found in Foggini Mus. Capit. l. iv. tav. 68.

not necessary for me to say anything about it; a circumstance that is peculiarly fortunate, as I do not understand it.

Diana *Triformis* is a small bronze sculpture, as light and portable-looking as a child's plaything; the three figures joined together, back to back, in the form of a small triangle. This goddess certainly forms the Pagan trinity. She is three in one—here she appears in hell, on earth, and in heaven, at once:—as Proserpine, crowned with the six rays of the planets, a serpent in one hand—as Hecate, her brows bound with laurel, holding a key—as Diana Lucifera, a lotus flower on her forehead, and bearing a torch. In all these varied characters—in the chaste huntress, and in the motionless Ephesian idol incased like a mummy in mystic symbols, who can recognize the same goddess?

Here is a bronze foot of the colossal statue of Caius Cestius; a bronze inscription of Sep. Severus and Caracalla, (the name of Geta erased,) a triumph of Bacchus, columns, busts, bassi-relievi, cinerary urns, minute images in bronze and alabaster of gods and goddesses; ancient tripods and candelabras; besides a hundred little other interesting antiques which will catch your eye.

I noticed a statera, with its weight, exactly like our steelyard, which I had no notion was so classical a thing.

In the wall of this room is the famous *Furietti* mosaic, found by the Cardinal of that name at Hadrian's Villa, representing four doves, perched on the brim of a large vase or basin, filled with water, one of which is drinking from it. Simple as the subject is, the taste of the design is most beautiful. It answers so exactly to Pliny's description of the famous Mosaic of Sosus, in the temple of Pergamus, that if not the original, which I confess I do not believe, it must at least be considered a copy. Winkelman* denies its originality, from the difficulty of transportation, a reason we can scarcely hold valid; but his commentator observes very justly, that as Hadrian was remarkable for his careful preservation of ancient works of art, encouraged their imitation, and emulated their perfection, but never carried them off from their proper possessors and situations, (unlike our

* Winkelman, Hist. de l'Art, liv. vi. chap. 7.

modern patrons of the arts,) it is much more probable that he caused the beautiful mosaic of Sosus to be copied by the best artists of his own time, than that he tore it up from the Temple of Pergamus, to embellish his own palace.

There is a sarcophagus in this room, adorned with a bas relief of wretched sculpture, perhaps of the fourth or fifth century, but the subject of which is very curious. It represents the whole Promethean creation of man. First, we see Prometheus moulding the figure out of clay, while Minerva is infusing into the lifeless mass, the spirit, in the form of a butterfly. Cupid and Psyche embracing each other, also represent the union of the body and soul. The four elements necessary to the life of man, surround them, and are personified by Æolus blowing his airy horn—Ocean, with the monsters of his watery reign—Vulcan at his fiery forge, and the "Common Mother," raising her breast above the ground, with a cornucopia in her hand. Man then appears endowed with life; and the three implacable Fates, who attend him from the cradle to the tomb, start up by his side. He is laid low in death. The Genius of life, weeping over his corpse, extinguishes his torch. The soul, bursting upwards on its butterfly wings, is conducted to heaven by Mercury. Lastly, we behold Prometheus suffering the gnawing anguish of remorse, or the vulture preying on his vitals. It is destroyed by Hercules. Will it be deemed profane to find in this a type of our Saviour's conquest over the penalty of sin?

There is a whole room filled with the busts of the emperors and their families, nearly complete. Even Commodus, an admirable bust, notwithstanding the decree to destroy every image of him, is here; and the unfortunate Geta, in spite of the labours of his brother and murderer to erase even his name from the earth, still stands by his side, as if haunting him in death. The busts of Germanicus, of Nero, and of Poppæa, are exquisitely beautiful. The contrasts of the countenance between Nero young, and Nero in more advanced life, will strike you forcibly; the beauty of the innocent face of Annius Verus will charm you; and the hideous head of Julian the Apostate will

puzzle you to determine whether the sculpture or the subject is the worst. The head of Otho, which is here, is extremely rare. The fine bust of Nerva, which has been erroneously reported to be modern, is a genuine antique. So is the head of Vitellius—though most of the busts of that emperor are modern.

You will never be satiated with admiring the noble seated statue of Agrippina, the wife of Germanicus. Yet the Agrippina of Naples is perhaps superior even to this. It realizes our highest conceptions of the august dignity of an ancient Roman matron.

The bassi relievi on the walls, of Perseus liberating Andromeda, and Endymion sleeping, are full of grace and beauty.

The bassi relievi in the next room, (the *Stanza de' Filosofi*,) from their subjects, rather than their execution, afforded me great entertainment. Among them are, a woman teaching a cat to dance, while she plays upon the lyre to it; poor Grimalkin trying all the time vainly to reach two birds suspended over its head—Calliope teaching Orpheus to play upon the lyre, before the image of a man, whom the strains seem to animate with life—Esculapius and Hygeia laying their heads together; and, in the next, the consequences not uncommon of such consultations,—a funeral procession. There are many more; but I was particularly struck with the tragedy of the death of Meleager. The uncles, pierced with their death-wounds,—his infuriated mother burning the fatal brand, to which the life of her son is attached,—his fainting form falling on the couch, and his beloved Atalanta vainly weeping over him,—altogether form a subject of the highest interest, but which is, perhaps, better adapted to painting than to sculpture; though no modern painter could do it justice.

In the middle of the room is placed an exquisitely beautiful little bronze statue of a youth, seated in a meditative posture,—a model of juvenile beauty. It is supposed to represent one of the twelve *Camilli*.*

As to the philosophers, some of the most interesting, such

* Priests instituted by Romulus.

as Virgil, and Cicero,* and Seneca, are purely supposititious. There is not a head of any poet or philosopher of the Augustan age, that we know to be genuine. The authenticity of some of the Greeks is ascertained, either from having been found with the ancient inscriptions of their names upon them, or from being prototypes of others so authenticated. The Homers, for there are several, are the very heads your fancy would pourtray for the old blind bard, the father of poetry. I understand they were identified with the apotheosis of Homer, formerly in the Colonna palace; and if (which is probable) no bust was really taken of him in life, this seems, at least, to have been the head current among the ancients as Homer; just as the posthumous picture of Shakespeare passes among us. Aristides is known from the incomparable statue at Naples. Socrates can never be mistaken. Metradorus, Epicurus, Pindar, Anacreon, and some others, are also ascertained. The little bronze and *bearded* bust of Demosthenes, found in Herculaneum, has identified the great orator. Sappho had a good right to be here; but how Cleopatra† got among these Grecian sages, we cannot guess. Her neighbour, Aspasia, was too much in their company, when alive, to be turned out of it now. The Platos are all recognized to be the heads of barbarians, notwithstanding their philosophic name inscribed below. The last of these busts, that of Faerno, an architect of Cremona, is one of the (now) rare works of Michael Angelo. I dare not tell you, that I think I have seen finer busts, by less celebrated hands, and therefore I will say nothing of it.

In the great hall, one is struck with the modesty of Clement XII., in having taken two Victories, from the Triumphal Arch of Marcus Aurelius, to support his coat of arms! It must, indeed, be acknowledged that the Popes want no trumpeter. Every little thing they make or mend, be it a wooden door, or a leaden cistern, or a few stone

* It is related that a medal was found of Cicero; but all the busts and statues which bear the name of that great orator are now acknowledged to be impositions.

† I need scarcely observe, there is no authority for the name this bust and many of the others bear.

steps, or a little bit of brick wall, is marked with their *munificenza!* These multiplied *munificenza's* of every Pope, as far as large gilt letters can prove it, stare you in the face in Rome, on all sides, wherever you go.

By their *munificenza*—two columns of giallo antico, from the neighbourhood of the tomb of Cecilia Metella, support the principal niche. But the sculptures in the middle of the room first attract the eye. Jupiter, in *nero antico* marble, is, after all, but poor; and, indeed, I have never anywhere seen a fine statue of the great thunderer. Esculapius is no better. The young Hercules (veiled) in *pietra paragone*,* found on the Aventine, looks fat and puffy, rather than strong; but the famous *Furietti* Centaurs I admire extremely; indeed more, I suppose, than I ought; for Winkelman (and, of course, all the critics echo him) gives them small praise, though he does not mention in which way they displease him, and only observes, that they have have anciently borne children on their backs, which is evident from the holes. The oldest, who bears the *pedum* in his hand, is thought to be Chiron carrying Achilles on his back, to instruct him in horsemanship and the chase. He looks back at the infant hero with a joyous and triumphant air. The other is dejected, and apparently vanquished; his hands are bound behind his back. I was much charmed with the life and spirit, the action, the freedom, and the grace, of these two beautiful Centaurs. They are of dark grey marble, were found in Hadrian's villa, and are inscribed with the names of two Greek artists, supposed to be of his own time.

A fine, but unknown consular statue, is foolishly called Marius, though, from his countenance, his air, and his action, it is obvious that he is an orator and a philosopher; and the rude, unlettered soldier was neither. Some critics call it a sepulchral figure.

The Amazons are fine. One of the heads is modern; both, as usual, represent wounded Amazons. Indeed, so close is the resemblance between all these statues, that we cannot but suppose they have been all taken from one or

* Commonly called touch-stone.

two celebrated ancient models, as well as most of the Fauns, Dianas, Venuses, Cupids, Bacchuses, &c., which, without variation of attitude or conception, crowd every museum. There were three rival statues of Amazons,—the productions of Ctesilaüs, Polycletes, and Phidias,—the fame of which has come down to our times.

The drapery of the fine Grecian statue of Isis, in this hall, knotted on the breast, and falling in graceful folds to the feet, is singularly beautiful. She wears the fringed *peplum*, or mantle, to denote her eastern extraction—the Grecians wore it plain. All the statues of this goddess, in white marble, are of the time of the Empire, after her worship was adopted in Rome, and are, for the most part, the work of Greek artists; but this is by far the finest.

The ancient bronze (and once gilded) Hercules, found in or near the Forum Boarium, with his head too small for his body, looks rather awkward and ungainly.

The old shrivelled crying crone—whether she be a *Præfica*,* a Hecuba, or any other of the innumerable descriptions of ugly old women, it is possible she may be—is certainly good of the kind, that is, well executed, though a disagreeable subject. I must pass by Antoninus Pius, with the civic crown he deserved so well; the Altar of Fortune, on which that goddess, who is now as ever the object of men's worship, is represented, seated on her throne, crowned with her diadem, holding in her left hand the cornucopia, and in her right the rudder with which she turns the world. I must pass by the pedestal on which the birth and concealment of Jove—the stupidity of old Saturn, in swallowing a stone instead of his son—the din raised by the Corybantes to stifle his cries—the care taken to suckle him by his four-footed nurse Amalthea—and, finally, his exaltation to the throne of heaven, are all very minutely represented. I must pass by many things—but I must stop for one moment at the finest statue in this room, and one that has never received its due share of encomium. It is the fine figure of a man speaking, with drapery round the lower part of the body only, in an easy graceful attitude,

* This is not probable, because these hired mourners had their hair "streaming to the troubled air," and this old woman has hers bound up.

one foot resting on a raised stone or step, and his finger held up as if to enforce attention. It is called a professor of the gymnastic art, or the master of an academy of gladiators, instructing his disciples. It is an admirable statue, and unique; but Harpocrates, that little mysterious god, with his brimming cornucopia in his hand, his brow adorned with the lotus flower, and his expressive finger pressed upon his lip, enjoins me silence. Plainer than words can speak, his gesture tells me how fat and flourishing he has grown by holding his tongue. I dare say you wish I would follow his example; but few of my sex ever did, and I shall go on to talk of the room where the jocund Faun, (in rosso antico,) eyeing the tempting bunch of grapes, which he holds suspended in his hand, and surrounded with his goat, his pedum, and his basket, looks the happiest of created beings. But notwithstanding the symmetry of his finely formed limbs, you will soon turn from him to one of the finest statues in the world—Cupid bending his bow. Its unrivalled grace, its faultless perfection, and its truly celestial beauty of form, are indeed a triumph of art. The Apollo Belvidere, and a few other great statues excepted, I am disposed to think this one of the finest exemplifications of the beau-ideal in existence. It is an ancient copy from the famous masterpiece of Praxiteles, of Cupid bending his bow, which was destroyed in the age of Titus. I have seen one copy in England, and there is another in the Villa Albani; but this is incomparably the finest. It is one of the few statues that I can return to gaze at, day after day, with still increasing delight and admiration. I am no connoisseur,—but few, very few, I believe, receive more pleasure from works of art, whether in painting or sculpture, when of first-rate excellence.

I was delighted with the beauty and playful sweetness of a smiling girl with a dove,—a personification of Innocence; a child playing with a mask; and, more especially, an urchin struggling with a swan, which Winkelman instances as a peculiarly beautiful sculpture of infancy.

One of the finest *bassi relievi* in the world—the battle of the Amazons—is on a sarcophagus in this room. Critics all agree, that the generality of sarcophagi, (and, indeed,

of bas-reliefs, which for the most part have been cut out of the sides of sarcophagi,) are works of the declining periods of art; but this beautiful piece of sculpture is an exception. Opposite to it stands another sarcophagus, well worthy of notice, though of very inferior sculpture. It represents the nocturnal visits of Diana to the sleeping Endymion. The goddess descends from her car, led by the Loves, a winged Genius restrains the fiery steeds. At the other end, by a liberty common to basso relievo, she mounts it again to depart, casting back her looks of love on the unconscious shepherd, over whose drooping form moth-winged slumber still hovers. The Earth,—personified in a female form, whose bust is raised above the ground, beneath the wheels of Diana's car—and a man tending Endymion's flock, complete the composition.

There is a very amusing bas-relief here of the Triumph of Cupid over the Gods. It seems to have formed a part of a frieze, and is left imperfect. We see, first, a car drawn by rams, in which this roguish god is carrying off the spoils of Mercury; then follow, in a car drawn by stags, those of the chaste Diana herself; in a car drawn by tigers, those of Bacchus; and in another drawn by hippogriffs, those of Apollo.

I must not quit this room, without mentioning a more recondite, though less amusing, piece of antiquity—the table of bronze, on which is inscribed the "royal law," found near St. John Lateran's, in which the Roman Senate decrees to Vespasian supreme power.

You now enter the last room, in which you will, for a long time, see nothing but the Dying Gladiator. It is, of its kind, the finest statue in the world. The learned connoisseur, and the untaught peasants, whom you may see assembled round it on Sundays, are equally struck with its faultless perfection. It is one of the finest of forms, as far as mere corporeal formation can go; but, unlike most of the celebrated works of ancient art, there is no ideal beauty, no expression of those high qualities and attributes, that spring from the soul. It is nature, pure nature, that arrests so forcibly our deepest sympathy. It is not a god nor a hero, but a man—and a man of servile condition and unelevated mind—that we behold. The coarseness of the

features and the whole expression of the head and figure prove it. The hands and the soles of the feet are hard and horny with labour, and a rope is knotted round the neck. He seems endeavouring to suppress the expression of agony; not a sigh, not a groan escapes him; unsubdued in spirit, it is his body, not his mind, that yields; but the hand of death is upon him; his life-blood trickles slowly and feebly from the wound in his side; he sinks in that last dreadful faintness of ebbing life, which all must sooner or later feel. He still supports himself with difficulty upon his failing arm, but his limbs have lost their force; his bristling hair and agonized face, express the dreadful workings of present suffering, and the inward conviction of approaching death. He is lying upon a shield; a short sword or dagger beside him, and a broken horn.

The critics say that this statue cannot represent a gladiator, because, at the period when this great work of Grecian art must have been produced, Greece had no gladiators, neither were the shield and short sword that lie by his side, the proper arms for gladiators; and yet we know that the *Secutores*, in their combats with the *Retiarii*, fought with swords,—whether long or short seems uncertain,—and with shields,—and why may they not have been such as these?* The *Dimachœri* also fought with two swords. The cord round the neck, and the horn, sadly perplex the critics; but it appears from an ancient Greek inscription, that the heralds of the Olympic Games had a cord tied round their necks, and gave the signal for their commencement by blowing a horn; nay, this very inscription was affixed upon the statue of a herald, who was also a victor in these games;† so that the statue we now see

* Pliny says, the porticos of the temples erected to the Claudian and Domitian families, were adorned with statues, the work of a freedman of Nero, representing the most celebrated gladiators of those days. The Apollo Belvidere is now believed to be a work of the age of Nero; and if so, the same age may have produced this statue, and it may represent a barbarian gladiator,—for barbarians were trained to these cruel sports. Nero's visit to Greece seems to render this supposition more probable; so also does the circumstance of its having been found in the same spot with the Apollo Belvidere and the Fighting Gladiator, at Antium, on the site of Nero's favourite villa.

† Winkelman, liv. vi. chap. 2, § 24.

may also combine both characters, and represent a herald and a wounded combatant. The mustachios, also, puzzle the antiquaries; for they maintain that the Greeks, even in the ancient times, when they wore beards, never wore mustachios; and that, therefore, this is not a Greek, but a barbarian;—nay, some late critics have maintained, that it is a barbarian chief,—but the cord round the throat is of itself a sufficient refutation of such an idea.

Winkelman conjectures that it may represent Copreas, the herald of Eurysthenes, "the most famous herald of Grecian mythology," who was massacred by the Athenians while attempting to force away the descendants of Hercules from the altar of Mercy; and for whose murder a solemn feast of expiation continued annually to be held at Athens, even in the days of Hadrian. But as Copreas was a Greek, he could not have had whiskers, and therefore this statue cannot represent him.

Indeed, these unfortunate whiskers come in the way in every possible supposition, excepting one. There was a statue, celebrated even in the brightest period of ancient sculpture, the work of Ctesilaüs,* "the statue of a wounded and dying man." The description† exactly answers to this statue. This is "a wounded and dying man;"—Why may not this be the statue? It is not probable that there should be two great masterpieces of ancient art, representing two "wounded or dying men;" or, if so, that Pliny would have noticed one only. Nor is it probable that a sculpture of such pre-eminent excellence as this, should be passed over unnoticed by Pliny, Pausanias, and all the ancient writers who have described works of art; and there is no other description in any author that can apply to it, excepting of this masterpiece of Ctesilaüs. The style, too, answers to that date.

I am therefore inclined to think it probable, that this statue is either the original or a fine ancient copy of the famous "wounded and dying man" of Ctesilaüs.‡

* A celebrated Grecian sculptor, who is supposed to have lived about the 62nd Olympiad.

† Pliny, Hist. Nat. lib. xxxiv. cap. 19, 4.

‡ Winkelman's objection to this supposition is worth stating, from

But be it what it may, "the Dying Gladiator" will always be accounted one of the finest pieces of sculpture that time has spared. Statuary has, indeed, bequeathed few of its ancient treasures to us, and we are vainly left to regret that only a few scattered fragments of that heavenly art

> "Float down the tide of years,
> As, buoyant on the stormy main,
> A parted wreck appears."*

I must not trust myself to describe the exquisitely beautiful group of Cupid and Psyche, which stands in this room, nor even to mention the far inferior, but extremely fine statues with which it is filled: the Flora, which Winkelman supposes not to be that goddess, but the portrait of some beautiful woman, under the image of Spring,—the Venus, the finest in Rome,—the Juno,—the beautiful Antinoüs, in the heroic style,—the Antinoüs as an Egyptian priest, or rather deity, as worshipped at Antinoë, so much extolled by the critics,—and the admirable ancient copy of the celebrated Faun of Praxiteles. The head of Alexander the Great has been set on awry with great care by the restorers, in order to prove it to be his; notwithstanding which, it is the fashion now to doubt it. For my part, I fully believe it, because it bears a strong resemblance to the ancient gems of undoubted authenticity, and because his is a head that, once seen, can never be mistaken. We are told, that

its absurdity:—"Je *crois* que cette figure [that of the celebrated statue of Ctesilaüs] représentoit un héros, parceque *je m'imagine* que l'artiste n'auroit pas voulu descendre à traiter des sujets d'un ordre inférieur, attendu que son grand mérite consistoit, suivant Pline, à donner encore plus de noblesse aux caractères nobles."—Vide WINKELMAN, l. vi. chap. 2.—Which, in plain English, is as much as to say, "Pliny, indeed, says it was the statue of a wounded and dying man; but he is wrong—he does not mean what he says. It must have been the statue of a wounded and dying hero; because as Ctesilaüs was remarkable for giving great nobleness to noble figures, he never would condescend to make the statue of a mere man. It was not noble enough for him."

If it had been the statue of a wounded and dying hero, Pliny would have said it was the statue of a wounded and dying hero; nay, he would probably have said of what hero. But as he says it was the statue of a "wounded and dying man," I shall believe it.

* Sir Walter Scott.

Apelles only had the right of painting it, Lysippus of casting it in bronze, Pyrgotelus of engraving it in gems; but history is silent as to the name of its privileged sculptor in marble.*

In looking back on the contents of this museum, I should say that the finest works it contains are the Osiris and Isis, the Furietti Centaurs, the Professor of the Gymnastic Art, the seated statue of Agrippina, and of the Camillus, the Child playing with a Swan, the Cupid bending his bow, the Cupid and Psyche, and above all the Dying Gladiator;† together with the noble marble vase, and its pedestal; the mosaic of the Four Doves, the beauty of which was commemorated by Pliny; and the bas-reliefs of the dispute between Agamemnon and Achilles, the Nine Muses, and the Battle of the Amazons, which are instanced by Winkelman as three out of the six most beautiful bas-reliefs in the world.

* Winkelman, Hist. de l'Art, liv. vi. chap. 3, who quotes Pliny in support of the fact.

† I forgot to mention that this statue was admirably restored by Michael Angelo. A part of one foot and arm, one hand, and some other minuter morsels, are replaced in the true spirit of the original, It is said to have been found at Nettuno, or Antium, in the same spot where the Apollo was discovered; and, like it, probably adorned Nero's favourite villa. There, also, was found the Borghese, or Fighting Gladiator.

LETTER LIX.

THE PAINTINGS AND THE PALAZZO DE' CONSERVATORI IN THE CAPITOL—ACADEMY OF ST. LUKE—RAPHAEL'S ST. LUKE—RAPHAEL'S SKULL.

FROM the Museum of Sculpture, at the Capitol, we must now proceed to that of Painting, which is, however, of very inferior interest. It is contained in the opposite Palazzo de' Conservatori,* in which are also some remarkable antiquities. Crossing the Piazza by the Equestrian Statue of Marcus Aurelius, we enter the court. All here reminds us of the grandeur of ancient Rome. Opposite to us sits Rome triumphant. At her feet weeps a captive province. By her side stand two prisoner barbarian kings: their mutilated limbs bear dreadful proof of her own barbarism; for it is evident, on inspection, that they represent captives whose hands have been cut off.†

* The Conservatori are officers appointed to keep the streets, roads, public buildings, &c., in proper repair and order. They seem, in some degree, to fulfil the office of the ancient Ædiles. They sometimes give great public feasts at the Capitol, to the cardinals and nobility, as if in imitation of those which were formerly offered up here to Jupiter and the gods, but really eaten by the priests and the senators.

† One of them has been cut off above the elbow, the other at the wrist. They are smooth and polished, and the drapery touches them so closely, that it is evident they were originally formed so. According to Winkelman, (lib. vi. cap. 5), they represent Thracian kings, of a people called *Scordisci*, and in the note it is asserted, on the authority of Florus, that the Romans cut off the hands of all their Thracian prisoners, and sent them back into their own country, to strike its inhabitants with terror. It is also recorded, that Quintus Fabius Maximus cut off the hands of all the Roman deserters in Sicily.—*Val. Max.* lib. ii. cap. 7.

We shudder at such horrors; and while we see that the most civilized of Pagan states far surpassed in cruelty the most barbarous of Christian nations, we bless the divine spirit of that religion which has worked the change.

The court is strewed with fragments of colossal figures of gods and emperors, of the most enormous size. Cæsar and Augustus stand entire. At the bottom of the staircase is placed the modern imitation of that ancient Rostral Column of Caius Duilius in the Forum, that commemorated the first naval triumph Rome ever obtained. A portion of the ancient inscription, which was found in making an excavation, is fixed in it. The whole was done under the direction of Michael Angelo. While this reminds us of the early days of Republican glory, and the relievo of Curtius plunging into the gulf recalls the great sacrifices of Roman patriotism,—the beautiful sculptures from the Triumphal Arch of Marcus Aurelius commemorate one of the proudest periods of her empire, and of those wide-extended conquests that subdued the world.

We observed two Egyptian idols, similar to those in the opposite court, and a remarkably fine animal group, of Grecian sculpture—a lion springing on the back of a horse; its fangs closed in the back of the animal. Though now defective, it is said to have been restored by Michael Angelo, who admired it particularly.

An ugly and headless image of a monkey in basalt in this court, bears an impudent inscription in Greek, that "Phidias, and Ammonicus, the son of Phidias, made it"—and Winkelman, though he acknowledges the inscription has every mark of being a forgery, and that the sculpture of the monkey itself is "*méprisable*," yet, having got an idea into his head, that a colony of Greeks once established themselves in a part of Africa, so infested by monkeys that they took the name of "*Grecs Pithecusins*," he next supposes that they took to worshipping monkeys; and, finally, arrives at the preposterous conclusion, that this frightful object was made by Phidias, for an object of adoration to these same "*Grecs Pithecusins*."* However, it appears that there never were any such Greeks; and that Diodorus Siculus only says, such a name would have suited the barbarous inhabitants of that monkey-infested and monkey-worship-

* "Je suis donc porté à croire que le singe du Capitole a été un objet de la vénération des Grecs Pithecusins.—*Hist. de l'Art*, lib. iv. cap. 6. § 63.

ping country,* not that they actually assumed it, much less that they were Greeks. The colossal head and hand of bronze in this court, are erroneously reputed to be fragments of a statue of Commodus.

After ascending the staircase, we pass through two rooms, and in the third, which is adorned with a fine frieze, painted by Daniel di Volterra, representing the Triumph of Marius, we find the bronze statue of the Wolf and Twins, supposed to be the same which Cicero states to have been struck by lightning on the Capitol, previous to the murder of Julius Cæsar. This Wolf, however, (for the Twins are modern,) was found at the Church of St. Theodore, in the Forum below. It has a fracture in the inside of the hind leg, but it seems to me almost impossible that the lightning should have struck it in such a part, and in no other. This Wolf is one of the few genuine productions of Etruscan art which remain to our days. It may be of very high antiquity, for even from the beginning, Rome was adorned with statues of bronze: a fact curious, not merely as proving the early period at which the fine arts had attained to this degree of perfection in Italy, but the refinement of the people, who, in the infancy of society, sought those embellishments of sculpture which are usually the latest appendages of civilization and polished life. The statue of Romulus, crowned by Victory, in a triumphal car drawn by four horses;† and the statues of the successive Kings of Rome in the Capitol; the statue of Horatius Cocles‡ in the Forum; and the Equestrian statue of Clelia§ in the Via Sacra, were contemporary with the persons in whose honour they were erected, and several of them were still standing, and still admired, in the ages of Augustus‖ and of Pliny.¶ They were all of bronze, and undoubtedly all executed by Etruscan artists. The bronze colossal statue of Apollo, made from the helmets and cuirasses of the conquered Samnites, was even thought worthy to adorn the library of the temple of Augustus.**

* Vide Note 2d, to § 64. cap. 6. l. iv. Hist. de l'Art.
† Dionys. Halic l. ii. p. 112.
‡ Idem, l. iv. p. 221.
§ Idem, l. v. p. 284.
‖ Sen. Consolat. ad Marciam.
¶ Plin. lib. 34.
** Plin. lib. 34, cap. 6.

The beautiful bronze statue of Martius the shepherd boy pulling the thorn out of his foot, and the figure of one of the Camilli, are admirable, but they are the only sculptures in the room worth notice, unless you wish to see the pretended bust of the elder Brutus, the liberator of Rome, standing by that of Julius Cæsar, its enslaver.

The next room is almost entirely occupied with the Fasti Consulares—the succession of consuls, found near the three columns of the Comitium, in the Forum.

In the fifth chamber you are shown two ancient bronzes, said to be of the Sacred Geese, whose clamour awakened Manlius, and preserved Rome from the Gauls; which reminded us that Rome, on the same spot,* was betrayed by a woman, and saved by a goose; but these geese on more accurate inspection turn out to be ducks.

The Medusa's Head, by Bernini, a piece of sculpture generally much admired, is here. The portrait of Michael Angelo, by himself, is extremely interesting, although some doubt has lately been thrown on its authenticity. There is a Holy Family, by Giulio Romano, said to be very fine; but the light is so bad, I have never yet been able to see it. There is (one of the many absurdities of Roman Museums) a bust, said to be of Appius Claudius (the blind,) in rosso antico—a material wholly unknown to the Romans in his simple republican age.

The frieze of the sixth chamber is painted in fresco, by Annibale Caracci, with the achievements of Scipio; and the last chamber is painted in fresco by Pietro Perugino, and adorned with two unknown statues, christened Cicero and Virgil.

In the little chapel beyond, a fresco of the Eternal Father, in the ceiling, by Annibale Caracci, and the Altar-piece by Avanzino Nemi, are worth notice.

These paintings in this palace, which fill three rooms, have been the most ill-used collection that ever was made; and though really the works of some of the best masters, they present the most black, battered, and forlorn appearance, that can well be imagined. A little cleaning and

* The Tarpeian rock, which received its name from the treachery of Tarpeia.

varnish* might do something for them; but many of them are irreparably injured. There are some, indeed, the destruction of which excites little regret. Amongst these may, perhaps, be reckoned the large and laboured productions of Pietro da Cortona, which abound here; though his Triumph of Bacchus is a pretty composition, rich, various, and classical. His Rape of the Sabines, Death of Darius, &c. have also considerable merit. It is the fashion to cry him down so unmercifully, that nobody will even look at his works; and I must own I never had any great pleasure in them myself, nor have I the smallest desire to vindicate him from the opprobrium he labours under so justly, of being the first corrupter of painting, the beginner of that rapid descent we have since made down the hill of taste. Still I think he is too outrageously vilified; and I am sure that, however inferior he may be to the great masters who preceded him, Italy can produce no artist now to compare with him.

His productions have certainly some learning, but little taste or genius. We can point out no glaring faults in design or composition, but we feel the absence of that which constitutes perfection. He draws good figures, but they want expression. He breathes no interest, no soul, no charm of nature, or ideal beauty into them. His colouring wants truth, and his lights effect.

Let us turn from them to Poussin's Triumph of Flora, which, faded and injured as it is, is still a most beautiful composition. His Orpheus playing on the Lyre, surrounded by Nymphs and Loves, is extremely fine, yet has some faults of execution which seldom occur in so careful a master.

Domenichino's Sibyl is a masterpiece of painting. Its rival, the Sibyl of Guercino, has not the same high character of inspiration in the beaming eye and the half-sundered lip. She is at rest, unmoved by those stormy passions, and that shuddering sense of coming evils, which are the curse of the prophetic spirit. But there is in her eye that settled sadness natural to one who can penetrate the darkness of

* Since the publication of the first editions of this work, the author has been informed, that the paintings in this gallery have been recently cleaned and re-arranged.

futurity, and see all its crimes and sorrows. Like most of the others, this beautiful painting has been much injured.

Guido's Bacchus and Ariadne is unfinished, and it would, perhaps, have been quite as well for his fame if it had never been begun. The drawing is bad, and the colouring worse. We must suppose it one of the many paintings which he dashed off to pay his gambling debts. His "Beatified Spirit," is far superior, yet still it seems to want something of celestial and glorified beauty, that, in his happier moments, he could have given it. His St. Sebastian, though extremely fine, is inferior to that at the Colonna Palace. A clever gipsy, telling a silly youth his fortune, at the same time she is cheating him out of it, is one of Caravaggio's admirable productions. It is much injured, and not quite so good as a duplicate I have somewhere seen of it. He ought never to have painted any but such subjects as these.

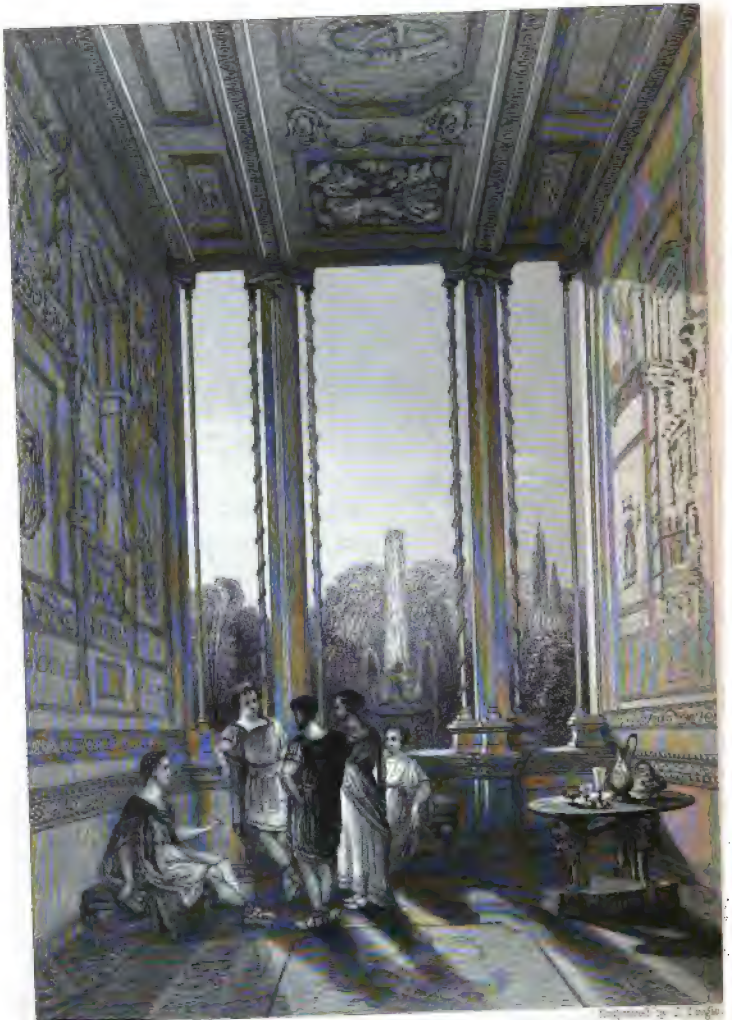
A beautiful Holy Family, by Benvenuto Garofalo; another, very small, by Albano—the Sick Man waiting by the Pool for the moving of the Waters, a beautiful little composition by Domenichino—a Landscape by the same—the Rape of Europa, by Paul Veronese, nearly invisible from dirt and injury, but reminding me, through it all, of his splendid Europa in the Doge's palace at Venice—Agostino Caracci's Communion of St. Jerome, diminished from his great painting at Bologna; these, and several more, by Guercino, A. Caracci, Francesco Mola, &c. are well worth your attention; but I will spare you any further enumeration of them.

I must, however, when here, carry you down into the Forum to the Academy of St. Luke. This society of sculptors, painters, architects, and engravers—of all, in short, who practise the arts of design, male and female,—possess for their Academy two mean, unimposing-looking apartments, behind the church of their patron saint. One of them is filled with models, designs, &c. some of which are by Michael Angelo; the other by a collection of painters, chiefly composed of the works of the modern Roman artists, and therefore not pre-eminent in their merit. The specimens of the great masters, which chiefly consist of a few little Claudes, Salvator Rosas, Poussins, &c. &c. &c., are by no means first-rate.

The famous picture in this Academy is, however, Raphael's St. Luke painting the Virgin's Portrait.* In this admirable work, Raphael has realized his own conceptions of an artist. St. Luke has all the fire, the glow, the inspiration, of commanding genius. It struck me with the most extraordinary admiration the first time I beheld it. I was then fresh from England, where, excepting the Cartoons, I had seen nothing worthy of the name of Raphael—none of the treasures of his genius which Rome contains, and I actually dreamt of this figure.

The skull of Raphael is preserved here, under a glass case! I suppose this must be a transporting sight to Messrs. Gall and Spurzheim, and all their disciples, but to me it was rather a shocking one. I had no pleasure in viewing the eyeless sockets, the grinning mouth, the mouldering vacant bones that once beamed with intelligence and beauty—and hearing that this was Raphael.

* Originally the altar-piece in the Church of St. Luke.



Drawn by C. E. Sargent.

APARTMENT IN A ROMAN PALACE.

LETTER LX.

ROMAN PALACES—PALAZZO DORIA.

PALACES, to an English ear, convey an idea of all that the imagination can figure of elegance and splendour. But, after a certain residence in Italy, even this obstinate early association is conquered, and the word immediately brings to our mind images of dirt, neglect, and decay. The palaces of Rome are innumerable; but then every gentleman's house is a palace,—I should say, every nobleman's, for there are no gentleman in Italy except noblemen; society being, as of old, divided into two classes, the patricians and the plebeians: but though every gentleman is a nobleman, I am sorry to say, every nobleman is not a gentleman; neither would many of their palaces be considered by any means fit residences for gentlemen in our country. The legitimate application of the word, which, with us, is confined to a building forming a quadrangle, and enclosing a court within itself, is by no means adhered to here. Every house that has a *porte cochere*, and many that have not, are called palaces; and, in short, under that high-sounding appellation, are comprehended places whose wretchedness far surpasses the utmost stretch of an English imagination to conceive.

Rome, however, contains *real* palaces, whose magnitude and magnificence are astonishing to transalpine eyes; but their tasteless architecture is more astonishing still.

Though they have the great names of Michael Angelo, Bramante, Verospi, Bernini, &c. &c. among their architects, though they are built of travertine stone, which, whether viewed with the deepened hues of age in the Colosseum, or the brightness of recent finish in St. Peter's, is, I think, by far the finest material for building in the world; and though, from the grandeur of their scale, and the prodigality of their decoration, they admitted of grand combinations, and strik-

ing effect, yet they are lamentably destitute of architectural beauty in the exterior; and in the interior, though they are filled with vast ranges of spacious apartments, though the polished marbles and precious spoils of antiquity have not been spared to embellish them, though the genius of painting has made them her modern temples, and sculpture adorned them with the choicest remains of ancient art, yet they are, generally speaking, about the most incommodious, unenviable, uncomfortable dwellings, you can imagine.

I know it may be said, that comfort in England and in Italy is not the same thing; but it never can consist in dulness, dirt, and dilapidation, any where. Italian comfort may not require thick carpets, warm fires, or close rooms; but it can be no worse of clean floors, commodious furniture, and a house in good repair.

In habitations of such immense size and costly decorations as these, you look for libraries, baths, music-rooms, and every appendage of refinement and luxury; but these things are rarely to be found in Italian palaces. If they were arranged and kept up, indeed, with any thing of English propriety, consistency, order, or cleanliness, many of them would be noble habitations; but, in the best of them, you see a barrenness, a neglect, an all-prevailing look of misery—deficiencies every where—and contemptible meannesses adhering to grasping magnificence. But nothing is so offensive as the dirt. Among all the palaces, there is no such thing as a palace of cleanliness. You see (and that is not the worst) you smell abominable dunghills, heaped up against the walls of splendid palaces, and foul heaps of ordure and rubbish defiling their columned courts; you ascend noble marble staircases, whose costly materials are invisible beneath the accumulated filth that covers them; and you are sickened with the noxious odours that assail you at every turn. You pass through long suites of ghastly rooms, with a few crazy old tables and chairs, thinly scattered through them, and behold around you nothing but gloom and discomfort.

The custom of abandoning the ground-floor to menial purposes, except when used for shops, which is almost universal throughout Italy, and covering its windows, both for security and economy, with a strong iron grate without any glass

behind it, contributes to give the houses and palaces a wretched and dungeon-like appearance.

It is no uncommon thing for an Italian nobleman to go up into the attics of his own palace himself, and to let the principal rooms to lodgers. Proud as he is, he thinks this no degradation; though he would spurn the idea of allowing his sons to follow any profession save that of arms or of the church. He would sooner see them dependants, flatterers, eaves-droppers, spies, gamblers, *cavalieri serventi*, polite rogues of any kind, or even beggars, than honest merchants, lawyers, or physicians.

The Fiano Palace has its lower story let out into shops, and its superior ones occupied by about twenty different families; among which the duke and duchess live, in a corner of their own palace.

It is the same case with more than half the nobles of Rome and Naples. But the Doria, the Borghese, and the Colonna, possess enough of their ancient wealth to support their hereditary dignity, and their immense palaces are filled only with their own families and dependants. Not but that, though lodgings are not let at the Doria Palace, butter is regularly sold there every week, which, in England, would seem rather an extraordinary trade for one of the first noblemen in the land to carry on in his own house. Yet this very butter-selling prince looks down with a species of contempt upon a great British merchant.

Commerce seems to be no longer respected in Italy—not even in Florence, where its reigning princes were merchants. Yet the proudest Florentine noblemen sell wine by the flask, at their own palaces. I wonder the profits of this little huckstering trade never induced them to think of entering into larger concerns, that they might have larger returns. I wonder it never led them to remember, that commerce was the source of the modern prosperity of Italy. But commerce cannot exist without freedom; a truth that princes and people have yet to learn here.

The palaces of all the ancient Roman nobility have, in the entrance hall, a crimson canopy of state, beneath which the prince sits on a raised throne to receive his vassals, hear their complaints, redress their grievances, and admi-

nister justice. Perhaps I ought to speak in the past, rather than the present tense; but they still exercise a sort of feudal jurisdiction over their numerous tenantry, among whom their will is law.

Above the door of every palace, upon the escutcheon of the family arms, we seldom fail to see—as if in mockery—the S. P. Q. R.—"The Senate and Roman People," serving only to swell the state of a poor Italian *Conde* or *Marchese*.

The gallery of the Doria Palace is reputed to be one of the best collections of paintings in Italy. It is more certain that it is one of the largest. For, along with some very good paintings, there are a great many very bad; so bad, that while the revered names of the greatest masters are sounding in your ears, you involuntarily turn away with indifference or disgust.

The whole of one very large room is filled with very large paintings by Gaspar Poussin. I mention their size first, because I really think it is their chief merit. They are among the earliest and least excellent of that profound and learned master. They seem to have been executed with lightning rapidity, with the impatient haste of a man that is conscious of powers not yet fully developed, and hurries through an irksome task that he may be at leisure to mature them by study.

Gaspar was a servant in the Doria family. He was not a Frenchman, as is generally supposed, but a Roman of low condition and untutored mind. His real name was Dughet, but he afterwards assumed the name of his brother-in-law, Nicolas Poussin, who, it is well known, came in youth to Rome, and finished his life there.

Beside this room-full, there are two landscapes by Gaspar and one by Nicolas Poussin, said to be very fine, but in lights so bad, that I never yet could succeed in seeing them.

Of the five Claudes—the "Molino" and the "Tempio d'Apollo," are exquisitely beautiful, and indisputably the finest Italy now possesses, though they are surpassed by several in England, whither the talisman of wealth has transported the master-pieces which its sullen skies forbid it to create.

The 'Molino" is the most admired by connoisseurs; but I am not a connoisseur, and I am afraid the composition of the Temple, on the whole, pleased me the most.

Domenichino's three landscapes are original and admirable. This artist, Titian, and Rubens, have proved to us, in their works, that they could have been great masters in landscape, if they had not chosen to be greater in historical painting.

How strikingly do the beauty of the landscapes, in the Communion of St. Jerome, and the Murder of Peter the Martyr,* add to the effect of the painting!

The "Belisarius" of Salvator Rosa, though the subject seems well adapted to his wild and gloomy genius, is yet by no means the happiest of his productions. His characteristic faults, especially of colouring, are more than usually apparent, and it possesses fewer of his redeeming beauties. It is too black, too heavy, dull, and exaggerated—Nature is not faithfully copied, nor pleasingly heightened; nor, after all these sacrifices to obtain it, is there true sublimity. The attempt to combine historical with landscape painting, has not been successful here; their defects, rather than their beauties, are mingled; the interest is too much divided between the hero and the scene, and we have neither a landscape nor a historical piece.

Annibale Caracci has, I think, succeeded better in the same perilous undertaking. His is a small but beautifully composed landscape, in the foreground of which, a Magdalen is extended, at the root of an aged tree, in all the abandonment of solitude and despair. Her uplifted eyes and clasped hands any painter could have designed; but who could have made the paleness of the cheek, the quivering lip, and the tears that tremble in the glistening eye, speak so forcibly to the heart? Annibale Caracci seldom addresses himself so directly to the feelings. He commands our approbation, he satisfies our judgment, he improves our understanding; but the strong expression of the passions, the agony of grief, terror, pity, supplication, and pathos, he has left to those who formed themselves upon his instructions—to Guido, Domenichino, and Guercino.

* At the Church of St. John and St. Paul, at Venice.

His *La Pietà*, or the Virgin and the Dead Christ, will be far more praised and valued than this little Magdalen in the Deserts. It is safer from criticism, it has far fewer faults, and beauties of a higher stamp. But is it not cold and dead? Is there no want of interest, no absence of feeling and expression, in that piece of correct design and pure composition?

La Pietà is a subject which artists seem invariably to treat with established insensibility; yet, surely, in a mother embracing the lifeless corpse of a son torn from her by a premature and ignominious death, there should be more of grief, of tenderness, of melting pity, and maternal love, than we ever see in those placid, inanimated, and undisturbed Madonnas; not to mention the feelings of *her* who was the mother of the crucified Saviour of the world. But I must get on faster through this long gallery, or you will tire by the way.

Guercino's Magdalen, Caravaggio's Magdalen, Cignani's Magdalen, Murillo's Magdalen, and Titian's Magdalen, all differ widely from each other, and are all fine paintings in their way, though Guercino's only has the character of a Magdalen. As for Titian, though an excellent painter of youth and beauty, he had no notion of penitence or pathos; and this Magdalen, like all his others, is a fine, fat, comely young creature, who differs in no respect from the picture of his unrepentant mistress, that hangs up here. His Sacrifice of Isaac is his chief work in this gallery; but it is not one of his great masterpieces. You will admire his portrait of the great Andrew Doria, for the sake of the man as well as the painter, and you will be delighted with that exquisite painting, said to be Luther and Calvin, and St. Catherine. It is a copy from Giorgione, from whom Titian learnt much, and whose paintings live and breathe on the glowing canvas. They have a charm about them that fascinates you, and makes you stand and gaze upon them with unwearied delight.

The very antipodes to the works of Giorgione or Titian, are the productions of Sasso Ferrato, the Roman Carlo Dolce. His Holy Family here is the best (excepting one at the Church of Santa Sabina,) I have ever seen of his works.

The St. Joseph, especially, is admirable. But in general, at Rome, nothing is to be seen of his but a mere multiplication of Madonnas, which bear, indeed, a curious coincidence with his name, for they always look like figures of stone.

From Sasso Ferrato turn to Raphael, and see all that Sasso Ferrato wanted. Here is a Holy Family, in his early style, before he had unlearned the instructions of Pietro Perugino; and also a duplicate of one I well remember seeing in the Stafford gallery, in his best and latest style. It is small; the figures are full-length, the Virgin is bending over the children, while the infant Jesus leans against her knees. The graceful flow of outline, the beautiful composition, the harmonized splendour of colouring, the tenderness of expression, and, above all, the chastened purity and holiness in the divine face and form of the Virgin, are Raphael's, and Raphael's alone. It is thought by many connoisseurs to be a copy, perhaps by one of his pupils; to me it seems to be original; at all events it is beautiful.

Leonardo da Vinci's portrait of Queen Joan of Arragon, is also of disputed authenticity. I think it bears intrinsic evidence of being done by Leonardo's own hand; and if this be the copy, where is the original? It has the violet tint, and the magical ivory smoothness of his finish, the oval contour of face,—all his peculiarities; and, above all, his peculiar excellence.

Here are two of these little trumpery crucifixions, falsely attributed to Michael Angelo Buonarotti, of which we see so many in Italian galleries. His contemporary, Vasari, tells us he only painted one oil picture; but it has been my lot, in this city alone, to see some dozens of his reputed works. If his great spirit could arise, and behold the wretched paintings shown under his name, he would assuredly annihilate with a frown the utterers of such a calumny.

Nicolas Poussin's copy of the *Nozze Aldobrandini* is admirable. It was a subject well suited to that classical artist, whose enthusiastic admiration, and unwearied study of ancient painting and sculpture, made him at last enter

into the true spirit of the ancients so completely, that his style, his figures, and decorations, even to the minutest parts, are strictly antique. His very fancy became Grecian. He thought as they would have thought, and designed as they would have designed. But, with all his poetical imagination, his classic taste, his purity of composition, his original thoughts, and the correctness and science of his designs, Poussin never will be a popular painter, from his neglect of colouring.

The Four Misers, an admirable piece of comic painting, worthy of Albert Durer, is by Quintin Matsys of Antwerp, whom love made a painter. He was a farrier, and fell in love with the daughter of an artist, who rejected him with scorn, declaring that "none but a painter was worthy of the daughter of a painter." The lover immediately laid down the hammer and took up the palette; and some of his productions having obtained the highest praise from the prejudiced father, who little suspected they were his, he at length obtained the fair object of his affections.

Among a great many of Caravaggio's paintings which adorn this collection, I noticed a St. Roque and his dog in prison; for it is a picture which compels you to look at it, and to allow that it is the work of a great and original genius. But the saint is a vagabond, a coarse peasant from the lowest class of men, unennobled by his sacred mission. How well Caravaggio loved to debase the loftiness of grand conceptions, annihilate sublimity, and, with his energetic touch, force us to dwell upon lowness and vulgarity!

Guercino's Prodigal Son is the best of his works I saw here. The Visitation of Saint Elizabeth is the finest of Benvenuto Garofalo's two paintings, both of which will catch your eye by their brilliant and beautiful colouring. You must see the Casta Susanna, and six little landscapes and figures, quite miniatures, by Annibale Caracci; Pan teaching Apollo to play upon the pipes, by Ludovico Caracci, coarse, but forcible, and designed by a master's hand and mind; Santa Veronica, with the admirable head of Christ, by Andrea Mantegna; Queen Semiramis, by Paolo Veronese; the Madonna adoring the Sleeping Jesus, by Guido

—the portrait of Rubens's Confessor, by himself—Pope Pamfili Doria, by Velasquez—Machiavelli, by Bronzino—and Bartolo and Baldo, by Raphael—all these you must see; but they form a very small part of the collection, although you will probably think the list already too long.

LETTER LXI.

PALAZZO COLONNA.

THE Colonna has by far the finest gallery, and about the worst collection of pictures, of any in Rome. The immense length and beautiful proportions of this building, the noble Corinthian columns and pilasters of giallo-antico marble that support it, the splendour of its painted roof, and the lustre of its marble pavement, delight the eye with the rare union of magnificence and taste, and well accord with the ancient greatness of the "Gloriosa Colonna." So indissolubly associated is that name in my mind with the remembrance of Petrarch, and of those days of brightness in which poetry shed her revived light over the classic regions of Italy, that although the ancient palace in which he sojourned has long since been razed to the ground, his very name gave to this modern building a charm which no palace, however splendid, could ever have possessed of itself.

Among the statues that adorn this gallery, there are none worth notice except an ancient Diana, and a small female figure reclining on her arm, an exquisite piece of Grecian sculpture, apparently very ancient. None of the people here could give it a name; but I remember a similar figure in the Townley collection at the British Museum, of very inferior sculpture, which is there called a Nymph of Diana reposing.

The Apotheosis of Homer, which Addison describes, the servants assured me was no longer in the palace. It probably was sold at the same time the finest paintings were disposed of, which was done, we were informed, to satisfy the rapacity of the French, who levied repeated contributions upon the noble families of Rome, to an immense

amount. One of the present Colonna family assigned this to me as the cause why two sides of this noble gallery, which are standing unfinished, have not been completed.

There are several fine paintings scattered through this immense palace; but so many bad ones, that the good are almost lost in the evil company among which they have fallen.

There are three Poussins, and in the gallery there is a Claude, which must once have been very fine. It is called the Temple of Venus,—and the beauty of the composition still charms the eye, through all the injuries it has sustained.

There are a great many of Orizonti's landscapes; some of them much superior to any of his I ever saw before. But there is still all the difference between the worst of Claude Lorraine's paintings, and the best of Orizonti's, that can exist between the strains of a true poet, and the epic of a dull rhymester. For Claude Lorraine's paintings are the poetry of nature; and he who ever gazed upon them without feeling in his inmost heart their beauty and their sentiment, must have a soul that would be unmoved by those emotions, not born of earth, that stir within us at the call of divine music, or diviner poesy.

Descriptions of paintings are so insufferable, that I should never mention one picture, if I did not know that by noticing the good ones, I may save you in part the slavery of examining a whole gallery of bad paintings, to find the few worth admiring. But, in pity to you and to myself, I must pass over several worth notice, or we shall never have done.

There is one, a Peasant eating his smoking hot dinner, gaping impatiently to take in a huge spoonful of scalding beans, but deterred by the fear of burning his mouth,—admirably told, with infinite truth and comic effect, by Annibale Caracci.

There is another in the same style, also said to be by him, but painted with all the comic humour of Caravaggio. It represents a knavish clown, with his dinner before him, grasping a flask of wine in one hand, and a glass in the other, and grinning so, that he absolutely makes the beholder grin too.

I observed a fine Madonna, by Annibale Caracci—Albano's Rape of Europa, and Christ between two Angels; two fine Tintorettos; Christ delivering the souls of the Blessed in Limbo, designed by Buonarotti, and painted by Marcello Venusti; a Madonna and Child, by Raphael, not, however, in his best style; and two Portraits, said to be of Luther and Calvin, by Titian. But the picture that riveted my attention was Guido's St. Sebastian; in which, joined to his usual chaste composition, and wonderful powers of expression, he has displayed a grandeur of conception, a force and freedom of pencil, a breadth, and a rare perfection of colouring, that I have seldom seen equalled in any of his works.

From this magnificent gallery we went to the garden, in which are to be seen the ugly and uninteresting remains of the Baths of Constantine, which I once before mentioned to you, and which certainly did not invite us either to explore or describe them again.

The garden hangs on the steep side of the Quirinal Hill, on the summit of which, the broken but massive fragments of an immense pediment of Parian marble, covered with the finest sculpture, repose on the soft green turf, overshadowed by an ancient pine-tree.

It was just a combination that a painter would have wished. It was more than picturesque. It was what his fancy could never have formed, but his taste must at once have selected. These fragments are called the remains of the magnificent Temple of the Sun, built by Aurelian, after his triumphant return to Rome, with Zenobia, the captive Queen of Syria, in his train. It is very well a thing should have a name, but the sculpture is far too fine for Aurelian's age; and, in fact, it is merely talking at random, to say to which of the splendid edifices that adorned the Quirinal Hill in Roman times, they belonged.

I wish the "Glorious Colonna" had let this ruined Temple of the Sun, or whatever temple it was, stand where it did. But the indefatigable labours of Martin V. and the succeeding Colonna princes, transported the noble columns, and all the rich spoils of antiquity found here, to embellish their palace; and unmercifully hewed down the beautifully

sculptured marble remains of this superb building, for the pavement of the gallery, the balustrades of the chapel, and the chimney-pieces of the sitting-rooms.

This garden has the remembrance of the Scipios attached to it. It is said, that the ancient site of their house, known even in Italian days by the name of *Casa de' Cornelj*, was within, or close to, that part of the garden which adjoins the Convent of the S. S. Apostoli.* But this, I think, I before alluded to.

Upon your return to the house, you will be taken through a suite of carpeted apartments, that look as if they might easily be made habitable, to see a little twisted column of rosso antico, about three feet high, which is called, impudently enough, the *Columna Bellica*, that stood before the Temple of Bellona, and from whence the arrow of war was thrown by the Consul, on the commencement of hostilities against any nation. To suppose that *this* bauble is *that* republican column is truly the height of absurdity. The material of which it is made was unknown till luxury brought her traiu of elegance and corruption, and twisted columns were unheard of till the decline of taste. The style of the triumph represented upon it in bas-relief, proves it to be the work of a degenerate period. I should have conjectured it to have been of the low ages, and brought from the Baths of Constantine in the gardens; but better judges pronounced it to be the sculpture of the *Cinque Cento*.

I turned from this toy to the only painting in this suite of rooms that had power to interest me—Guido's Portrait of Beatrice Cenci. She was young, beautiful, and noble—but a parricide. Yet, when you look upon her, it is scarcely possible to believe it. Did that sweet and expressive face, that gentle form, harbour a soul, that, with cool premeditation, could embrue her hands in the blood of her father? But I know not how to give the crimes of that father a name. They were such as to make humanity shudder—such as a fiend incarnate might have rejoiced to have perpetrated. The brutal insults, the wanton cruelties, the

* Nardini, Sul Quirinale.

diabolical sufferings, of which he made his innocent children the victims, were not the worst. He was a monster without shame, remorse, or pity; and if he had had ten thousand lives, he well deserved to lose them—by any hand but hers. Yet it was his daughter, who, in the silent midnight, when even the iron hearts of the ruffians she had hired relented, seized the avenging dagger from their nerveless arm, and plunged it into the breast of a sleeping parent. But, how shall I find words to stigmatize that government which could afford no protection from tyranny the most atrocious, from sufferings the most cruel, from insults worse than death; and which drove this young and ill-fated being to murder, for the very security of her innocence! How shall I speak my horror at a government that condemned the whole of a young and innocent family, even the little children, to the torture, that the perpetrator of the murder might be discovered! And what heart does not melt with pity when they hear, that though she had herself borne the rack with unshrinking firmness, yet, when her little brother was seized by the executioner to be placed upon it, and his plaintive voice cried, "O save me! save me!" she burst forward, and screamed aloud, "I am the murderess!"

The utmost efforts of the unhappy girl were directed to save her mother, who was implicated in the guilt. She asked no mercy for herself. But all was in vain, and the mother and daughter perished together, by a public and ignominious execution.

I may be wrong, but the fate and misfortunes of this young and criminal being sunk deeper on my heart than the sufferings of many of pure and unsullied fame. For the deepest misery had driven her to the deepest guilt, and she passed on to death without the unutterable consolations of approving virtue.

There is a settled sorrow, a wildness, and a prophetic melancholy in her eye, that is inexpressibly touching; and weak though it be, I own that I have wept over the feeling, the speaking, the angelically lovely countenance of her who stabbed her father.

Above, in a suite of very little rooms, full of very stupid

little paintings, you will see a Magdalen by Guido, the speaking beauty and pathos of which I shall never forget. My feeble praise cannot do justice to its merits.

You will also find there, and dispersed over the palace, a multiplicity of imitations of Salvator Rosa, by that parrot of landscape painters, Andrea Locatelli. Farewell.

LETTER LXII.

Palazzi Barberini and Sciarra.

The present representative of the Barberini family, one of the most ancient, and once one of the most proud, wealthy, and powerful of the Italian nobility, now lives in one half of the attic story of his own palace. The other half is occupied by the Prince of Peace; and the principal floor is inhabited by Charles VII., the late king of Spain, and his old Queen.*

Poverty, which drove the Prince Barberini to his garrets, has compelled him to dispose of that celebrated Museum of ancient sculpture, vases, gems, cameos, intaglios, medals, &c., which was so long the wonder and admiration of Europe. Whither it is now dispersed, no one can say. When a museum is once sold and scattered, I have often thought it as good as lost to the world.

The famous Sleeping Faun† is cased up in wood, ready to be sent off to Munich, and only waits to cross the Rhætian Alps, till the Ægina Marbles, which the Prince of Bavaria has also purchased, are ready to bear it company.

A noble ancient lion, in white marble, found in a tomb near Tivoli, adorns the staircase. I believe the sculptures,

* A.D. 1820, when this work was first published, and many years subsequently.

† This Faun was found in the ditch of the Castle of St. Angelo, and is supposed to have been one of the statues which Belisarius is accused of having hurled down upon the besiegers.† (Vide Procopius. De Bello Goth.) But a Faun, reclining in sleep, seemed a strange ornament for the exterior of a mausoleum; and other accounts render it dubious whether any other statue than that of Hadrian himself ever stood upon the Moles Hadriani.

as well as the paintings of this palace, were divided with the Prince Sciarra, another branch of the family. Of the Barberini half of the pictures, the finest have been sold, and those that remain are seen under all the disadvantages of bad lights, dirt, and utter neglect.

But some among them triumph over every disadvantage.

Nicholas Poussin's death of Germanicus, is one of the finest of his learned and masterly compositions. Its colouring, never, perhaps, very good, has suffered much from time and injury; but its other merits atone for this great defect, and the more it is studied, the more it will be admired. The energy of spirit, struggling with the sinking weakness of approaching dissolution, the heroic fortitude of the sufferer, and the grief of the inimitable group that surrounded his death-bed, are finely pourtrayed. Poussin has, indeed, transfused into this painting the true spirit of the ancients. He has not copied them, but he has composed and created as they would have done.

His Miracle of St. Peter, who restores to life and strength a boy that had fallen from a window, and shattered his limbs dreadfully on the pavement, is extremely fine, and in much better preservation than the Death of Germanicus.

Raphael's Portrait of his Mistress, the Fornarina, is not in his best style. There is a hardness, a poorness, a constraint, in the manner; no freedom of pencilling, or glow of colouring. She wears an armlet, with the name of Raffaello Sanzio da Urbino, inscribed upon it.

There is a small Holy Family, by Raphael, so much injured that its beauty is nearly effaced. A fallen Corinthian capital, introduced into it, adds to its picturesque effect; and, perhaps, is intended typically to represent the overthrow of Paganism by the birth of the infant Christ, at whose feet it lies. A beautiful little Claude has also been most cruelly defaced.

Tintoretto's Christ is fine. The Pietà is designed by Buonarotti. It exactly resembles his group, in sculpture, of the Virgin and dead Christ, at the Cathedral of Florence.

Guido's Portrait of St. Andrea Corsini, the original of

the Mosaic in the Corsini Chapel, at St. John Lateran, is in his best style. Christ disputing with the Doctors, by Albert Durer, is excellent in its kind. I never yet saw any one whose risibility was proof against these Doctors' faces.

The other paintings best worth notice are, Parmegiano's Marriage of St. Catherine (much injured.) Caravaggio's Martyrdom of St. Catharine; Guido's St. Agatha; Andrea Sacchi's Apostles; Cignano's Joseph and Potiphar's Wife.

Those worthy personages, the old King and Queen of Spain, and the Prince of Peace, go out to take an airing diurnally, at the *venti-due e mezzo*,* in two heavy coaches and six, with outriders to clear the way, &c.

We understood that the paintings in the apartments of their ex-majesties could not be seen without their own royal permission; but as soon as this procession drove off to-day, we went to try, having no other passport or introduction than a *piastre*. It is worthy of remark, that on our request of admittance, it was declared to be "impossible;" but, on the production of this talisman, a pretended leave was asked of some invisible person, and, lo! the doors were opened.

Of the paintings, or other curiosities contained in these regal chambers, however, I can give you no account, (a loss I can suppose you capable of bearing with becoming fortitude;) but my companions of this morning could atone for my deficiency, for they saw the whole collection, before I had found out half the beauties of two splendid Murillos, and hurried me away, without staying themselves to give one glance to the great hall, painted in fresco by Pietro da Cortona.

They carried me up the opposite staircase to the apartments of the Prince of Peace, whose paintings have a merit rare here,—that of being clean, and in good preservation. They are worth seeing. There are many good copies, and a few originals.

The garden of the Barberini Palace is pointed out as the site where the ancient capitol of Numa Pompilius stood. I

* Half-past twenty-two o'clock, or one hour and a-half before sunset.

know of no creditable authority to support the opinion that Numa, that priestly king, ever had a capitol on the then uninhabited Quirinal Hill, for Plutarch seems to speak of a house only. The minute and accurate Livy would not have omitted mentioning it, had it existed, or been known to exist; and surely, in his day, he had more chance of discovering that such a thing had been, than we have now.

Palazzo Sciarra.

The proud lords of the Sciarra, one of whom in ancient times struck a pope, whom he took prisoner, with his gauntlet, now share with other tenants their only palace on the Corso.

The other division of the Barberini paintings are in their apartments; and as they are unimpaired both in number and value, they are one of the most select collections of any in Rome.

There is here a Holy Family, by Andrea del Sarto, which is extremely admired. Andrea was so successful a copyist of the works of Raphael, that when that great master's famous portrait of Leo X., between the Cardinals Medici and Rossi, and his copy of it were placed side by side, Giulio Romano, who had himself painted the draperies in that very picture, after much attentive examination, pronounced Andrea del Sarto's copy to be the original.

This poor man's real name was Andrea Vanucchi, but he was called Andrea del Sarto from his father's trade, and Andrea *senza errori* from his own faultless works. They might have been more faultless, if he could have prolonged his studies in Rome; but it was his misfortune to be cursed with a wife who embroiled him with all his friends, bereaved him of his pupils, drew him from the patronage of Francis I., and involved him in debt and dishonour. In his last sickness he was abandoned by the ungrateful woman for whom he had sacrified friends, fortune, fame, and integrity. He died at the age of forty-two, in the extremity of poverty, misery, and even of famine.

There is another Holy Family, by another great master of the Florentine School, which I admired far more. It is by

Fra' Bartolomeo: the glow and freshness of colouring in this admirable painting, the softness of the skin, the beauty and sweetness of the expression, the look with which the mother's eyes are bent upon the baby she holds in her arms, and the innocent fondness with which the other child gazes up in her face, are worthy of the painter whose works Raphael delighted to study, and from which, in great measure, he formed his principles of colouring.

The cloister has produced many great logicians, theologians, and politicians; many renowned diplomatists, intriguers, and prime ministers; indeed, more men versed in the knowledge of this world, than could be expected from a spot sanctified to the purposes of another; but very few poets, painters, or men of genius. It did not produce, but rather buried one, in Fra' Bartolomeo della Porta; for he entered the cloister in consequence of a rash vow, and was persuaded, or obliged, from false scruples, to destroy all his studies and paintings in nudities. Lippo, and Sebastian del Piombo, and several other great painters, however, emerged from the cloister; but by far the greatest number of celebrated painters have sprung from the lower classes. Giotto was a shepherd; Andrea di Mantegna, a cattle-driver; Gaspar Poussin, an errand-boy; Claude Lorraine, a pastry-cook; Marcello Venusti, a colour-grinder; Tintoretto, as his name implies, the son of a dyer; Caravaggio, a plasterer; and Salvator Rosa, a lazzarone in the streets of Naples.

Leonardo da Vinci and Buonarotti were both of noble birth, and both Florentines.* Leonardo so far surpassed all his predecessors and contemporaries, that he seemed to be the only painter in the world, till his fame was eclipsed by Buonarotti, who was twenty-two years his junior. Perhaps Buonarotti's contempt for colouring was, in some measure, derived from Leonardo's superiority in it. He chose to undervalue that in which he did not excel.

In their rival cartoons of the Battle of Pisa,† so decided was the superiority of Michael Angelo's in design and composition, that the preference was unanimously given to it.

* Leonardo was born in the village of Vinci on the Arno, near Florence.

† Lanzi, Storia Pittorica.

But both these great works were spoken of as prodigies of art, and formed the study of succeeding artists, till they were unfortunately, or rather maliciously, destroyed.

It is unfortunate for the fame of Leonardo, that both his greatest works have perished. This cartoon disappeared early; and his Last Supper, in the deserted refectory of the Dominican convent at Milan, nearly destroyed by the French soldiers who occupied this convent as a barrack, is scarcely the shadow of a shade; indeed, it has been so often retouched and restored, that no trace of the original painting is now supposed to remain.

Considering these disasters, and the extreme slowness with which he painted, for it is recorded that he was employed four years on the portrait of Gioconda alone;* it is I think, wonderful that so many of his works still exist, for he was not only a painter, a sculptor, and architect, and an engineer, but one of the most accomplished men of his age. In poetry, music, dancing, fencing, and riding, he was unrivalled. He invented a new lyrical instrument, formed chiefly of silver, and he excelled as an improvisatore. He was the delight and ornament of society in the court of the Duke Sforza at Milan; nor was his time entirely devoted to the fine arts. His predilection for science, and his studious habits, are proved by the voluminous manuscripts still extant in his handwriting, in the Ambrosian Library at Milan.†

His residence at Rome was short. The ill-judged and illiberal sarcasms of Leo X. disgusted him, and the friendship of Francis I. drew him to the French capital, where, during a lingering and hopeless illness, he was cheered by the unremitting kindness, and is even said to have expired in the arms, of that amiable and noble-minded monarch.

The portrait of Leonardo, in the Gallery of Florence, by

* That it might be four years before it was finished, I can believe; but that he was employed four years solely upon painting one portrait, is not credible, nor consistent with the activity of his mind and his unwearied application.

† Nine volumes of these manuscripts have been retained in Paris, whither the whole work was transported at the time the French plundered Italy.

his own hand, is one of the finest heads, and the most exquisite painting, I have ever seen. One of his best works is in this palace,—Modesty and Vanity, which is, I think, inferior only to his Herod's Daughter, in the Tribune at Florence.

Here is a masterpiece of Caravaggio's; a sharper playing at cards with a youth of family and fortune, whom his confederate, while pretending to be looking on, is assisting to cheat. The subject will remind you of the Flemish school; but this painting bears no resemblance to it. Here is no farce, no caricature. It is true to nature; and the expression, though admirably given, is not in the least overcharged. Character was never more strongly marked, nor a tale more inimitably told. It is life itself, and you almost forget it is a picture, and expect to see the game go on. The colouring is beyond all praise.

Raphael's Portrait of a Musician, a friend of his own, is supremely beautiful.

There are two Magdalens, by Guido, almost duplicates, and yet one is incomparably superior to the other. She is reclining on a rock, and her tearful and uplifted eyes, the whole of her countenance and attitude, speak the overwhelming sorrow that penetrates her soul. Her face might charm the heart of a stoic; and the contrast of her youth and enchanting lovelines, with the abandonment of grief, the resignation of all earthly hope, and the entire devotion of herself to penitence and to heaven, is so affecting, that it has drawn tears from many an eye. Every picture in the last apartment is a masterpiece.

There are some fine Saints by Guercino; a Portrait of a Lady, by Bronzino; a capital Housemaid by Leonetta Spada; an exquisite painting by Giorgione; and many more that ought to be seen, and must be admired—but they cannot be described; for palaces appear before me in long array, and before we have got through them, I shall have exhausted both your patience and my own.

LETTER LXIII.

THE PALAZZI MASSIMI AND SPADA—POMPEY'S STATUE—PALAZZO COSTAGUTI—PALAZZO MATTEI.

THE Palazzo Massimi, though one of the smallest and worst situated of the Roman Palaces, is, I think, the prettiest building of them all. The simplicity of its Doric portico and court particularly pleased me, and does great credit to the taste of Balthazar Peruzzi, who was its architect. In those days every painter was an architect; yet I cannot think the two arts well adapted to be united in the same profession.

We visited this palace to see the famous Discobolus,* which is the finest in the world.—at least, above ground. It is, indeed, an admirable piece of Grecian sculpture, and well worth seeing. It differs in nothing, except its superiority of execution, from every other Discobolus. All of them are ancient copies from one original—the celebrated Discobolus of bronze, the masterpiece of Myro.

Judas returning the thirty pieces of silver to the Chief Priest, by Caravaggio, is the only painting here worth looking at.

We were shown a chapel, formerly a bedroom, in which that notable saint, Filippo Neri, raised from the dead a son of this noble house, on the 16th of March, 1583, in consequence of which grand miracle S. Filippo Neri was canonized, the place was consecrated, and a solemn service is still annually performed in it upon the anniversary of the day.

We Protestants, being, in the opinion of the Roman Catholics, of the number of those "who will not believe, though one came from the dead to tell us it is so," went

* Found in the grounds of the Villa Palombari, on the Esquiline Hill.

away in the persuasion that the Humane Society worked such miracles every day, though nobody made saints of them in consequence.

In the stables of the neighbouring Palazzo Pio, it is said some of the remains of the walls of Pompey's Theatre may be seen. I did not go to look for them.

Palazzo Spada.

We afterwards visited the Palazzo Spada, to see the celebrated Statue of Pompey, at the foot of which Cæsar fell. Every one knows that it was found below the foundation-wall of two houses, in a lane near the site of the Curia of Pompey—that the proprietors, unable to settle to which of them it belonged, the head being under one house and the feet under the other, imitated the judgment of Solomon, and resolved to cut it in two—and that a cunning Cardinal, hearing of this, persuaded the Pope to buy it, and to make him a present of it.

The statue is larger than life, and in the heroic style—that is, with no other drapery than the chlamys, which covers one shoulder. The style is certainly not of first-rate excellence, but this statue has an interest beyond all that statuary can give; and we gazed upon it till the long-past scene seemed again realized—till Cæsar, defending himself against the conspirators, saw at length the dagger of his most trusted friend; and, willing to leave a world in which faith and friendship were empty names, exclaimed—"Et tu, Brute!" as he folded his head in his robe, and sank in death.

But there is no recollection or belief that the fancy loves to cling to, that these vile antiquaries do not come with their "doubts," to disturb. They "doubt whether this be the statue of Pompey—Possibly an emperor, because he carries the globe in his hand." An emperor!—But what emperor?—They are all, except the last dregs of the emperors, pretty well known. They took care to multiply their persons, and what with statues, busts, medals, and coins, one sees them so continually, that there is no mistaking their physiognomy. I feel as intimately acquainted with the

twelve Cæsars as if I had known them all my life; and the countenance of the mild and martial Marcus Aurelius, and his coxcombical colleague, the whiskered Lucius Verus; the plain features of Hadrian, and that dark ruffian Caracalla's unbending frown, are as familiar to me as my own face.

The statue of Pompey bears no resemblance to any known emperor. From the style of sculpture, it cannot represent any of the latter ones—it answers to the state of the arts at the close of the Republic;—it was found on the spot where the Statue of Pompey stood; it bears a strong resemblance to the head on his medal, (published in the Museo Romano;) and as to the objection of his bearing the globe, was there any thing extraordinary in the adulation of marking the extent of his conquests, by putting that symbol into the hand of a victorious general, whose triumphs had extended over the then known world, through Europe, Africa, and Asia; and who, till his glory was eclipsed by the brighter star of Cæsar, was the idol of the Roman people, and virtually the master of the world? No! the conviction is irresistible; and in spite of all the antiquaries, I *will* believe it to be the Statue of Pompey, that very individual statue, at the foot of which "great Cæsar fell."

Eustace says, that the arm of the statue was sawn off by the French, in order that they might transport it with more facility to the Colosseum, where they acted before it Voltaire's foolish tragedy of the Death of Brutus. That may be, but the arm is known to be a modern restoration; and, therefore, as the French only cut off what had before been put on, they did no great harm. Had the arm been ancient, the question as to the identity of the statue would have been decided at once, for, if that of an emperor, it would have borne the sceptre.

Winkelman says, that "if it be the statue of Pompey, it is the only statue of a Roman citizen of republican times in the heroic style." But it is the only statue of a Roman citizen of republican times, in any style, that has come down to our day; and how, therefore, can we be so very sure that they were never so represented? All the statues of Cæsar, the contemporary of Pompey, are in the heroic

style; why, therefore, may not this? Indeed, the times of Pompey and Cæsar were no longer republican, except in name. Wealth and luxury had introduced as total a change in manners as in politics. Greece had become the great standard of perfection—the model of imitation; and, as we know that Pompey, more particularly, affected to adopt the arts and modes of the Greeks in everything, can we wonder that his statue should be in the same style as all the statues of their great men?

There are several pieces of ancient statuary here: the little God of Slumber reposes in the sweet sleep of infant innocence, his poppies lying in his ungrasped hand.

But the finest by far is the Statue of an old Philosopher, sitting in a chair; supposed to be intended for Antisthenes listening to Socrates, an admirable piece of Grecian sculpture.

There are two fine antique bas-reliefs, which were brought from the staircase of the Church of St. Agnes *fuori le murà*, representing Perseus liberating Andromeda, and Endymion sleeping. They are duplicates of those in the Museum of the Capitol.

There cannot be imagined a more deserted, dreary, decayed, and deplorably dirty place, than this poverty-struck palace.

Above stairs, there is a collection of pictures, some of which are, or rather have been, good; for they are cracked, spoiled, defaced, and destroyed with damp and darkness, dirt and neglect.

The best I observed among them were, St. Anne teaching the Virgin to sew, admirable for its nature and truth, by Caravaggio, in the style in which he excelled; Christ led to Crucifixion, by Andrea Mantegna; St. Jerome, by Albert Durer; Lucretia, and also a fine Portrait of a Cardinal, (a Spada) by Guido.

There is a little practical perspective in the court, formed by a diminishing colonnade, which gives the effect of great length, though really very short. It was made by Borromini, whose genius I could wish had been confined to such nice little works as these.

PALAZZO COSTAGUTI.

The Palazzo Costaguti is a most dismal, dirty, miserable place. Words cannot give you an idea of its utter wretchedness, and I could scarcely believe these forlorn, filthy chambers were the residence of the Marchesa I had seen blazing in diamonds at the ***** ambassador's ball, the night before. We visited it to see the ceilings, painted in fresco, with which it was adorned in its earlier and more prosperous days.

The first is by Albani. It represents the Centaur carrying off Dejanira, and Hercules slaying him with the arrow. What it may have been, it would now be unfair to judge, for the colouring is faded, and very little of the grace and beauty of Albani remains.

The ceiling of the second room has fallen in; the destroyed fresco was Polyphemus and Galatea, by Lanfranco. I cannot be sorry that the works of a man, whose envious malignity pursued the amiable Domenichino through life, literally persecuted him to death, and defaced the matchless frescos that he could not equal, should, by a sort of poetical justice, be in turn destroyed.

In the third chamber Apollo appears in his car, drawn by four horses, white, red, grey, and black—I suppose to represent the different times of the day; but such horses! they may be like heavenly steeds, but I am sure they bear no resemblance to earthly ones. In a corner of the room is old Time, seizing hold of a frightened woman called Truth. I gazed with astonishment and disappointment on this ceiling, for they say it is by Domenichino. I can only say, I hope not; and that, I am sure, if Domenichino did paint it, he never painted any thing else so bad. Amongst the immense variety of frescos with which he has adorned Rome, this is the only one unworthy of his genius.

Rinaldo and Armida, borne through the air in the car of the Enchantress, drawn by dragons, is by far the finest fresco in this palace. It is by Guercino, and designed with all his force and energy, heightened by all the splendour of

his chiar'oscuro. The figure of Rinaldo is very fine; but Armida is not what the poet's fancy would have painted.

Justice and Peace, by Lanfranco, so far as the extreme darkness of the room would allow us to judge, is a very fine painting; but, perhaps, the uncertain light gave it an imaginary beauty, as I have sometimes seen an ordinary woman look almost divinely lovely in the soft beam of fading twilight, or shaded moonlight; and witnessed, for the first time, scenes at that magic hour, which seemed beyond description beautiful, but which, when viewed in the garish eye of day, were stripped of every charm.

Next—I saw

> "———Arion on a dolphin's back,
> Uttering such pleasing and harmonious breath,
> That the rude sea grew civil at his song,
> And certain stars shot madly from their spheres,
> To hear the *minstrel's* music."

Poetry apart, however, Arion on the Dolphin's back is a beautiful painting, by Romanelli. Upon another ceiling, are some Gods and Goddesses, and Peacocks, by the Cavaliere d'Arpino; and plenty of bad paintings, with high-sounding titles, on the walls.

Palazzo Mattei.

We have been several times at the Palazzo Mattei, if possible a still more deplorable place than the Palazzo Costaguti, in order to see Rachael and Jacob, a fresco by Domenichino, which, by a kind of fatality, we have never yet seen. Our attempts have been all fruitless; either we thundered for half an hour at the door and got no answer, or, if we obtained admittance, the Cardinal Mattei was in bed or at dinner; or else he had gone out with the key in his pocket, even when a time had been fixed; so that we have given it up in despair. By means of our frequent visitations, we saw some very fine ancient bas-reliefs in the court and on the staircase, and one fine painting in the house—a Holy family, painted by Parmegiano, with all that grace and captivating sweetness to which he always aspired; and without any of that unfortunate affectation which too often marred his

works. Yet the best of them prove that he was a mannerist, and a close, though a successful imitator of Correggio. But an imitator, in any of the fine arts, can never be great: or, rather, a truly great genius will never be an imitator; for the very act of imitation is a confession of inferiority. Still, so beautiful are many of his paintings, that we cannot but regret that this infatuated man should have wasted his time, his talents, his fortune, and his life, upon the wild and visionary pursuit of alchemy, in which he blasted all his hopes, and sacrificed even his integrity.

LETTER LXIV.

PASQUIN—PALAZZO BRASCHI—PALAZZO GIUSTINIANI—'PANTHEON BY MOONLIGHT—PALAZZO BORGHESE.

THE mutilated statue of Pasquin* stands at the corner of the Palazzo Braschi, where he has cut his caustic jokes for many an age, and levelled, with impunity, his sarcasms against priests and princes, popes and cardinals, church and state.

The statue of Marforio, in the court of the Museum of the Capitol, was his ancient respondent: but their witty dialogues and smart repartees are now at an end.

There is another mutilated figure in a street in Rome, which is known by the name of Madam Lucretia,† but, unlike the loquacity of her sex, she has always maintained a strict silence.

Pasquinades, however, are still occasionally current in Rome, though, perhaps, no longer affixed to Pasquin. Amongst many smart epigrams and squibs of satire, some of which would not be intelligible out of Rome, the following seems to me one of the best, and it has, at least, as much truth as point to recommend it.

> "Venditur hic Christus, venduntur dogmata Petri,
> Descendam infernum ne quoque vendar ego."

Pasquin did not spare the French during their stay here. Among the many squibs against them he said,

> "I Francesi son' tutti ladri."—
>
> . . . . . .
>
> "Non tutti—ma *Buona parte*,"

was the anticipated reply.

* It received its name from Pasquino, a sarcastic tailor, who used to work at his shop hard by. Though excessively mutilated, it has evidently been a fine piece of sculpture.

† This figure is usually supposed to have been an Isis.

On a tremendous storm, which took place after the decrees of Buonaparte were put in force at Rome, the following somewhat profane pasquinade appeared:—

"L'Altissimo in sù, ci manda la tempesta,
L'Altissimo qua giù, toglia quel che resta,
E fra le due Altissimi,
Stiamo noi Malissimi."*

Canova finished the figure of Italy (a draped statue,) for the tomb of Alfieri, about the time the French overran the country. Soon afterwards the following appeared:—

"Questa volta Canova l'ha sbagliato,
Ha l'Italia vestita, ed e spogliata."

One of the best things of the kind, I think, was made on the colonnade in front of Carlton House,† by an Italian, a man of some taste, who, being accustomed to see columns supporting something, or of some use, stood amazed at the sight of this sinecure row, and questioned them as to their employment, thus—

"Care Colonne! che fate quà?"

. . . . . .

"Non sappiamo in verità,"

was their innocent reply.

But to return to the Palazzo Braschi. As you ascend the staircase, you will be struck with its noble architecture, which is in the most chaste and classical taste. The stairs are led up between a colonnade formed of columns of red Oriental granite, the high polish of which accords well with the lustre of the variegated marbles, of which the stairs and ballustrades are composed, and with the graceful symmetry and just design of the whole. The coup-d'œil, as we mounted it the other night, when brilliantly lighted up for a grand fête given by the Austrian ambassador, was more striking than any thing of the kind I ever saw.

* On the visit of the Emperor Francis to Rome in 1819, a pasquinade appeared free from this fault:—

"Gaudium Urbis. Fletus Provinciarum. Risus Mundi."

† Formed by a long range of remarkably beautiful, but unmeaning, useless columns. The Colonnade and Palace of course disappeared together.

Like most of the noble families of Rome, the Duca di Braschi no longer inhabits his paternal palace. His was the crime of being the nephew of Pius VI., and consequently of opposing the surrender of Rome to French despotism. It was atoned for by the confiscation of his property; and amidst the wreck of his fortune, and the dispersion of his family, the Palazzo Braschi was left in unfinished magnificence.

In the gallery of the palace, the bare unplastered walls of which form a striking contrast to its noble proportions, stands the beautiful Colossal Statue of Antinoüs, which was dug up on the site of the ancient Gabii, by the late Gavin Hamilton. Its colossal size was probably the cause why it was not removed to Paris; for the late conquerors of Italy could have had no scruples of conscience in appropriating this statue, if they could conveniently have carried it off, after seizing upon every other piece of sculpture belonging to that unfortunate family that was worth taking.

I do not recollect any thing more in this gallery worthy of notice; but my eyes were so entirely engrossed by the matchless beauty of Antinoüs, that I could look at nothing else; and scarcely, as I gazed upon it, could I wonder that Hadrian believed that form to be inhabited by a god.

This admirable piece of sculpture is secluded from the public eye by the present inhabitant of this palace, the Austrian minister. As we we were acquainted with him and his amiable family, we had no difficulty in seeing it; but I cannot admire this system of exclusion.

Palazzo Giustiniani.

The ancient and wealthy Giustiniani family are now beggars, and their palace is inhabited by strangers. All its fine paintings are gone. We inquired in vain for Poussin's Massacre of the Innocents, Domenichino's St. John the Evangelist, Annibale Carracci's Christ and the Cananean, or Caravaggio's Incredulity of St. Thomas. It would be easier to make a list of what this palace has lost, than what it possesses. There is not a single good painting left. We were

shown a great number of frightful daubs, each of which was dignified with the name of some great artist. I once asked the man if he was certain one he called a Domenichino was an original,—to which he replied, "*Originalissimo*, Signora!"

This superlatively original painting was so superlatively bad, that it was well the spirit of Domenichino, who, during his life, was accustomed to every insult, could not know this greater opprobium cast upon him after his death.

This palace is built upon the ruins of Nero's Baths, and a prodigious quantity of statuary, of all kinds, was found in them, which once adorned its magnificent galleries and spacious halls; but the finest of the statues, like the pictures, have disappeared.

An immense number are still standing, in utter confusion, in a set of miserable, unfurnished, dusty, and desolate apartments; and though the most part of the busts and statues are mutilated, and all of them are discoloured and abominably dirty, there are many among them of very fine sculpture. Among these I will only mention the Statue of Marcellus, in the hall, and a youthful male figure, the Torso of which is very fine; but it is badly restored, which, indeed, is the case with many of them.

The Etruscan Vestal is not allowed to be Etruscan, and seldom acknowledged to be a Vestal; but she is unquestionably very ancient*—too ancient to be perfect. There is an admirable goat close beside her, which I liked much better; and there is the statue of the little Harpocrates, holding up his finger and looking wise—a god I always admire, though I cannot be reckoned among his disciples. Pray, can you tell me why the ancients gave the God of Silence a cornucopia?

The best view of the Pantheon is from the windows of this palace. I saw it by moonlight, when the softened light gleamed beautifully in silver lines upon the tall columns of the portico, more distinctly marked by the dark shade of the intercolumniations, while the serenity of the sky, and the stillness that reigned over every thing, made its beauty more deeply felt.

* Winkelman "dares not maintain that it is the work of any Etruscan artist," but thinks it is "perhaps, the most ancient statue in Rome.

You will wonder what took me to the Giustiniani Palace at night, but we happened to be dining with Count Funchal, the Portuguese ambassador, who lives there; and, as it was moonlight, I took the opportunity of looking out at the Pantheon; ever since which time, his excellency has entertained a rooted conviction that I am slightly deranged; and never sees me without asking, if, when the moon is at the full, I will not return to his house to see the Pantheon. "Well, that is what I don't understand," said an Italian Principessa, when he told her of this extraordinary fancy of mine—"for, certainly, one can see plainer in the day-time than the night."*

Palazzo Borghese.

The Palazzo Borghese, one of the largest and handsomest palaces in Rome, is now inhabited only by Pauline, the sister of Buonaparte, and the wife of the Prince Borghese, who himself lives constantly at Florence. This building, which would seem large enough to contain some hundreds of people, is, apparently, too small for a single lady; for there is another, "*Il Palazzo della Famiglia Borghese*," to which my unlucky stars once conducted me; and its filth and foul odours have left an uneffaceable impression upon the remembrance. The *famiglia*, in modern as in ancient Roman days, means the servants; and not the domestic servants only, but the tradespeople, all of whom are included in this comprehensive term; and this horrible hole, of which I have been speaking, is inhabited by the artisans who are, as well as by many who are not, employed in the service of the Borghese.

When a Roman prince has, or *had*, a grand entertainment, (for such a thing rarely occurs now,) all the tailors, shoemakers, joiners, carpenters, upholsterers, smiths, and artisans, whom he employed, were dressed out in state liveries, kept for this purpose from generation to generation; and, for the time being, were turned into footmen. Therefore it

* Non lo capisco—di certo, si può vedere più chiaro da giorno che da notte.

[illegible] at took me to the Giustiniani [illegible] [illegible] to be dining with Count [illegible], [illegible] ambassador, who lives there; and, as it [illegible] took the opportunity of looking out at the [illegible] ever since which time, his excellency has enter- [illegible] rooted conviction that I am slightly deranged: and I [illegible] me without asking, if, when the moon is at the [illegible] will [illegible] turn to his house to see the Pantheon. [illegible] I don't understand," said an Italian [illegible] he told her of this extraordinary fancy [illegible] one can see plainer in the day-time [illegible]

[illegible]AZZO BORGHESE.

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* [illegible] di certo, si può vedere più chiaro da giorno che da notte.

BORGHESE PALACE.

was no uncommon thing on the day of a fête to see half a hundred livery servants; but if you returned when it was over, you would not find half a dozen.

It is a literal fact that, happening to return to the palace of a Roman nobleman rather early on the morning after a ball, in order to inquire after a cross of jewels I had lost, I found, in the great hall, piles of livery-coats, and the Principessa herself telling them over.

It was not, however, the Principessa Borghese, who is a very different personage.

Some years ago Canova scuptured a statue of this lady, as Venus, and it is esteemed by himself one of the very best of his works. No one else can have an opportunity of judging of it, for the prince, who certainly is not jealous of his wife's person, is so jealous of her statue, that he keeps it locked up in a room of the Borghese Palace at Rome, of which he keeps the key, and not a human being, not even Canova himself, can get access to it.

The fine Museum of Sculpture which the prince gave to Buonaparte in exchange for the bubble of the Viceroyalty of Turin, is irreparably gone; but the principal part of the paintings are now restored, and form by far the best collection of any in Rome. They appear to every disadvantage, for they are arranged in a suite of very ill-lighted apartments on the ground-floor; the only ground-floor I ever remember to have seen inhabited in Rome.

The Domenichinos, the Titians, and the Albanos, are certainly the finest in Rome. Domenichino's Sibyl, and his Sports of Diana and her Nymphs, are works that no praise of mine can do justice to. I have returned to them again and again with undiminished delight, and found them as new, and quite as beautiful, the twentieth time as the first. They are by far the finest of this fine collection of paintings.

Titian's Graces are very fat, not very young, and dressed in very old-fashioned gowns; but they are exquisitely painted. They are employed in binding Cupid. But, out of Venice, I have seen nothing of Titian's to compare to his Sacred and Profane Love, which is here. It represents two figures, one, a heavenly and youthful form, unclothed, except with a

light drapery; the other, a lovely female, dressed in the most splendid attire; both are sitting on the brink of a well, into which a little winged Love is groping, apparently to find his lost dart.

Description can give you no idea of the consummate beauty of this beautiful composition. It has all Titian's matchless warmth of colouring, with a correctness of design no other painter of the Venetian School ever attained. It is nature, but not individual nature; it is ideal beauty in all its perfection, and breathing life in all its truth, that we behold. And, if the character of Profane Love has too much in it of Sacred, such is the charm of the expression, that what we criticise as a fault, we yet admire as a beauty. For this powerful genius has not only called down Divine Love from heaven, but given to Earthly Love that character of sentiment and feeling that allies it to divinity.

There are several other Titians, and some very fine ones. His Prodigal Son is a splendid painting. The Woman kneeling in Supplication before Christ, wants the greatness of manner his better works display.

Here are Venuses in abundance; but the true painter of Venus, in my opinion, was Albani. It was he who invested her with those captivating graces and charms that seem to spring from the magic cestus, and proclaim her the Queen of Love. It may be a fault, the continual repetition of the same face in all his paintings, however lovely and engaging; but when we remember that it was the countenance of his wife he loved to draw, we willingly pardon it.

He has represented Venus in four different pictures; 1st, borne on her triumphant car, and surrounded by her laughing Loves; 2ndly, equipping herself at her toilette; 3rdly, busy at Vulcan's furnace, forging arrows for Cupid; and, lastly, gazing enamoured upon Adonis, which is the masterpiece of the whole.

David with Goliath's Head is a masterly work of Caravaggio's. It has all his strong lights and nervous energy; but it wants what he always wanted, elevation; though the ghastly expression of the head, the livid lips, and the deadly paleness of David himself, gave it all the horrible effect he could have desired.

St. Anthony Preaching to the Fishes, by Paul Veronese, is one of the oddest paintings I ever saw. The saint is on a rock, and his figure, especially his right leg, is much admired by the cognoscenti. The groups that surround him, in various listening attitudes, are admirable; but they occupy only one small corner of the picture; the rest is one waste of bright dauby green—sea and sky, clouds and ether, all the same shade of grass-green. I concluded that the blues had turned green, never conceiving that any body would think of painting a green sky; but was assured by a connoisseur that it was quite correct, and done on purpose; that the painting would otherwise have been worth nothing, and that it was extremely fine. If so, it is certainly the most simple receipt for fine painting I ever heard of.

Parmegiano's St. Catharine, his favourite subject, has great grace and sweetness in the face, great elegance and flow of outline, and none of his usual affectation.

I cannot give the same praise to Leda, by Leonardo da Vinci, which is distorted, even to frightfulness, with excess of affectation.

Elizabeth Sirani's painting, on touch-stone, of Judith in the act of prayer, before she murders the sleeping Holofernes, is by far the best of her productions I have ever seen. A mere imitator can never be great, and she was certainly a mere imitator of Guido; but in this little work she seems to have felt the true spirit of her master.

A landscape, by Annibale Carracci, is a beautiful composition, and the head of St. Francis is extremely fine. Cigoli's St. Francis, a full-length, is an excellent painting. The divine expression of the uplifted eyes, and the hands clasped in transport, the force of the design, and the glow of colouring, are admirably thrown out by the cold dark background.

Christ tied to the Column, designed by Michael Angelo Buonarotti, and painted by Sebastian del Piombo, is a very grand work. The Saviour is not too much humanized, even in the lowest state of ignominy and degradation, he is undebased. The Divinity speaks in each gesture and lineament; and while we execrate the impious hand that could lift the scourge against that suffering spirit, we

shudder to think such wretches were of the same nature with ourselves.

Raphael's Deposition from the Cross, is said to be one of his earliest paiutings; but it is not in the stiff stretched-out style of Pietro Perugino; and though it was unquestionably done before he had staid long enough at Florence to have studied the works of the Florentine School,* it is, even in design, a masterly performance. The body is being borne to the Sepulchre, and the bearers, and the whole group that surround it, with all their varying expressions and passions, are extremely fine. We behold grief under every varying form. St. Peter, old, sober, and sorrowful; his grey hairs, and silent, composed, yet deep-seated affliction, finely contrasting with the passionate sorrow of Mary Magdalen, at his side; but the Virgin, and the unutterable heart-breaking agony of spirit expressed in her fainting form, touches the heart the most powerfully. It was a beautiful thought, for painting could never have expressed overwhelming grief, such as hers, but by insensibility. The distinction between her figure and that of the dead Christ, is finely and strongly marked. Though both are pale and lifeless, in her you see it is the suspension of life, in him a total extinction; that she will revive to all the bitterness of affliction; but that the soul which animated his divine form is fled for ever.

The coldness, the rigidity, the insensibility of death, are strikingly portrayed; but those touching features, and that pallid corpse, while they tell of mortal sorrows and sufferings, still bear the hope and the sublimity that are triumphant over the grave; and we gaze upon them till we almost exclaim,—"How beautiful is death!"

Raphael's admirable Portrait of that monster Cæsar Borgia, his fine Portrait of a Cardinal, Benvenuto Garofalo's Deposition from the Cross, Giorgione's Saul and Goliath's Head (exquisite colouring), a lovely Venus in the Bath, by Giulio Romano, Venus and Adonis, by Luca Cambiasi, Lanfranco's Orco seizing Lucilla (from Ariosto), and Leonello Spada's exquisite Concert of six men and a boy, are amongst the pictures I remember best. But this cata-

* Lanzi, Storia Pittorica.

logue, unconscionable as you may think it, does not comprise one half of those worth notice in this collection, which contains the greatest number of fine ones, and the fewest bad, of any in Rome.

LETTER LXV.

Palazzo Luciano.

Lucien Buonaparte, the prince of Canino, has purchased a large palace in the Via de' Condotti, for his winter residence. A very small part of it is inhabited by himself; the rest is let to a variety of lodgers. This seems somewhat extraordinary, since he is said to be immensely rich.

I cannot applaud his liberality in refusing all strangers, excepting those personally acquainted with him, permission to view the admirable paintings his fine taste has collected. We, indeed, were not sufferers by this illiberal, and I fear, more peculiarly our English system, being among the privileged few; but the more we admired them, the more we regretted the general exclusion of our countrymen from the Palazzo Luciano.

This collection is small, but entirely composed of masterpieces, and kept in beautiful preservation; a very unusual circumstance in Rome. Many of the famous pictures of the Giustiniani Gallery have found their way here.

The Massacre of the Innocents, a most masterly, but horror-striking painting, by Nicholas Poussin, makes us shudder while we gaze, yet rivets us before it. It is a complete tragedy. The agony of the mother is given, even to the extremity of nature itself, and her screams seem to rend the very heart.

Christ before Pilate, the masterpiece of Gherardo delle Notti, is extremely fine; and he must be wedded to system indeed, who would refuse his admiration to such a work, because, forsooth, 'he does not approve of candle-lights.' No lights will enlighten such critics as these—critics who think and feel by rule, and never know what it is to yield to the spontaneous judgment of nature and truth.

But, among all the various and inviting attractions of this collection, the masterpieces of the Caracci drew my unsa-

tiated admiration. I can find no words to speak my praise of 'Christ giving sight to the Blind,' by Ludovico Caracci; 'Christ and Mary Magdalen,' by Annibale Caracci; or 'Raising the Widow's Child from the dead,' by Agostino Caracci. I may be wrong, but to me, these works of these three great masters surpass even the celebrated ones at Bologna. They are, indeed, works of such surpassing perfection that I may not trust myself to speak my sense of their beauty, for I feel that I could not restrain myself; and that, like Dr. Johnson, I can better practise abstinence than temperance. For the same reason I forbear to describe (nor could I) the exquisitely beautiful Holy Family of Raphael; *(La Madonna de' Candelabri;)* Christ and the Woman of Samaria, by Giulio Romano; Titian's Diana surprised by Actæon; Domenichino's Saint John and other Saints, adoring the Virgin; Guido's St. Cecilia, (a divine head, in a turban, playing on the violin;) Christ expiring on the Cross, designed by Michael Angelo Buonarotti; and many other first-rate paintings. Here are some noble portraits. One of the Dukes d'Urbino, (I could not learn which; and could only hope it was that of the good and great Federigo,) by Raphael; Rubens, by Vandyke; one of Rubens's Wives, by himself; Francis I., by Holbein; and several others.

Our artists complain that portrait-painting cramps their genius, and ruins their fame. But these are portraits that, of themselves, would confer immortality on the hand that painted them. Never, then, let it be said, that this branch of the art affords no field for eminence. If Raphael, and Titian, and Giorgione, and Rubens, and Rembrandt and Vandyke, and Velasquez, had never painted any thing else, their works would have been invaluable, and their names imperishable.

Here is an admirable painting by Van Molle, Diogenes with a lantern looking out for an Honest Man; an Old Woman with a Dog, by Francesco Mola (capital); and Modesty and Vanity, by Leonardo da Vinci, a duplicate, (perhaps the original,) of that in the Sciarra Palace. But this is only rehearsing a list of names—names that call up to me all the unspeakable beauty of the originals, but which, to you, must be a dull, dry, unmeaning catalogue.

LETTER LXVI.

Palazzo Nuovo di Torlonia—Palazzo Falconieri—Camuccini and his Collection.

Nobility is more certainly the fruit of wealth in Italy than in England. Here, where a title and estate are sold together, a man who can buy the one secures the other. From the station of a lacquey, an Italian who can amass riches, may rise to that of a duke. Thus Torlonia, the Roman banker, purchased the title and the estate of the Duca di Bracciano, fitted up the *Palazzo Nuovo di Torlonia* with all the magnificence that wealth commands; and a marble gallery, with its polished walls, lofty columns, inlaid floors, modern statues, painted ceilings, and gilded furniture, far outshines the faded splendour of the halls of the old Roman nobility.

The new gallery is adorned with Canova's colossal group of Hercules and Lychas, which is by no means one of his finest works. Like Guido, the *forte* style is not suited to his beautiful genius; and the sculptor of Venus, with all her smiling train of Loves and Graces, could not do justice to the frantic giant, maddened with the pain of the poisoned mantle, and hurling its wretched bearer into the gulf—a horrible subject, which would have suited Michael Angelo, if it had suited statuary at all.

The fresco of the Marriage of Cupid and Psyche, by Camuccini,—incomparably the first modern historical painter of Italy,—unhappily reminds one of Raphael's beautiful fable in the Farnesina. But the composition is good without plagiarism, and it is admirably designed. In design, indeed, Camuccini excels; and it is no light praise. I cannot say so much for the colouring; and on this account, the original sketch, which we saw at his own studio, is far superior to the finished painting.

Palazzo Falconieri.

The Palazzo Falconieri, when this work was first published, was occupied by Cardinal Fesch, the uncle of Bonaparte, and contained a large and valuable collection of the Italian, Flemish, and French schools. It is now dispersed in consequence of his death, and consequently would have been passed over unnoticed but for one remarkable work, the Salutation of Elizabeth, originally painted in fresco on the wall of the Church of Santa Maria della Pace, in which are the Sybils of Raphael, and taken off on canvas (that hazardous operation) in which the French destroyed, as was supposed irremediably, the great masterpiece of Daniel da Volterra, although it was subsequently almost miraculously restored by a secret process invented by Camuccini. But this admirable painting (the Salutation of Elizabeth) designed by Michel Angelo, and painted by Sebastian del Piombo, to whose merits no description of mine can do justice, was successfully transfered from fresco to canvas, and was, as I have stated, in the possession of Cardinal Fesch up to his death. Where it is now and who is the fortunate possessor of this treasure, I know not.

The whole of Cardinal Fesch's noble gallery of pictures was offered by him, in the last years of his life, for sale to the English government, for an annuity of £4000 per annum! I do not hesitate to say that this single picture was worth the price to the British nation. The works of the great masters are too few and too inaccessible in our country to those who most require their study—young artists, whose early promise is often entirely blighted by the want of this inestimable advantage. This large and varied collection would have formed the nucleus of a grand national museum of paintings, not then even projected, nor until long afterwards. But this great opportunity, by the parsimony of our government, in all that relates to the Fine Arts, was lost for ever.

Another of the treasures of this collection was the Ascension, by Guido, one of the most splendid of his works. The grandeur of conception, the glowing colouring, and the divine expression of the Virgin's face, radiant like that of a celestial

being or beatified spirit, "with less of earth in it than heaven," can never be forgotten. It seems, literally, one blaze of glory.

This reminds me of another admirable picture of Guido's —the two Mary's weeping at the foot of the Cross. Darkness covers the earth. The pale and cold form of the crucified Redeemer—the divine expression of his face, even in death—and the agony of the soul that darkens the countenances of the two Mary's—find their way to the heart.

This picture, with many others of rare merit, was in the private collection of Camuccini, who ranked highest among the modern painters of Rome when this work was first published; and though probably this most choice collection has been dispersed by his death, I cannot forbear enumerating a few of them, particularly Guido's Madonna adoring the Infant Christ. The infant was perfectly enchanting; the glossy smoothness and purity of the skin—the sweetness and innocence of the slumber—the health of the cheek—and the nature and grace of the attitude, could not be surpassed.

This is a proof that Guido knew how to suit his colouring to his subject. The rosy hues of infancy, in his sleeping children, and the dazzling brightness of his Ascension, are not less adapted to their peculiar expressions, than those pale silvery tones, that give such pathos to the countenances of his suffering martyrs, his supplicating Magdalens, or his sainted Madonnas. What I have heard called the faults of Guido's colouring, I have often felt are beauties. They accord so touchingly with the expression, that the want of glow and life is more than compensated by their sweetness and perfect harmony.

But perhaps the gem of this choice collection was a beautiful little original sketch, by Raphael, in sepia; a mere scratch on a bit of parchment; which, more than the "circle drawn at a stroke," marks the masterly genius of that incomparable painter. Although not larger than my hand, yet what is there that the most finished painting should have, that is wanting to this hasty sketch? The astonishing genius of the composition, the chasteness of the design, and the powerful expression, I can never sufficiently admire. The subject is the Deposition of Christ, in the moment in which his

sainted form is to be deposited within its last earthly home, by his disciples. The grouping of such a number of figures in so small a space, the various expressions of the same passion—but, above all, the Virgin in an agony of affliction, embracing the feet of Jesus,—her long hair falling over her head, and her figure, her action, her hidden countenance, more deeply expressive of the abandonment and desolation of grief, than all that the most laboured effects of the pencil could otherwise have done—are far beyond my feeble praise.

Esther before Ahasuerus, from the Barberini Collection, one of Guercino's finest works, and in his best style, was also here.

The portrait of Scaliger, by Annibale Caracci; and that of Sebastian del Piombo, exquisitely painted by himself, are truly admirable; also the portrait of Lavinia, Marchesa di Pescara, by birth one of the princesses of the Colonna family, said to be designed by M. A. Buonarotti, and painted by Marcello Venusti. This distinguished woman was the friend of Michael Angelo, and of every contemporary man of genius, and was herself a being of most extraordinary endowments. She was a celebrated improvisatrice, and genius, sensibility, and intelligence beam on her beautiful face. She has chosen to be drawn with no symbols of science—a pretty little dog is sitting on her arm.

The Sketch of a Head, by Leonardo da Vinci; and an Ecce Homo, by Carlo Dolce, are extremely fine. So also, is a beautiful little group of Cupid borne along by the Loves, who are sporting around him, by Guido.

There was a Claude, a duplicate of one in the Louvre—a Sea-port, Boats, Ships, and Figures on the Beach, illumined by those golden beams of sunset that Claude alone could paint.

The Gods and Goddesses, travestied, holding a sort of burlesque masquerade, is a very curious and valuable painting, by Gian Bellini, the master of Titian, and father of the Venetian School. The landscape, which is painted by Titian, is, like all Titian's landscapes, truly beautiful. Gian Bellini was far superior to his brother, Gentile Bellini, whose fame, however, must have spread even to the utmost depths of the Ottoman seraglio, for Mahomet II. invited him to Constan-

tinople, sat to him for his picture, loaded him with presents, and treated the painter of Venice with all the pomp and splendour of Asiatic magnificence. But it unluckily happened that Gentile painted a Decollation of St. John the Baptist; and Mahomet, who, no doubt, had frequently studied the subject in nature, descried a defect in the manner in which the blood spouted out in the picture, and, after making his criticism, very coolly turned round, and ordered the head of a slave who happened to stand near him to be instantly struck off before their eyes, by way of illustration, in order that Gentile might see his error. The unfortunate painter was so terrified at this sight, that he scarcely felt certain that his own head was upon his shoulders, and neither could sleep by night nor rest by day, till he obtained Mahomet's permission to return to Venice, where heads were not chopped off by way of experiment.

Camuccini possessed some exquisite frescos of Domenichino, which, for want of room, were locked up in a sort of coach-house, along with some marbles, of the most beautiful sculpture, brought from the Forum of Trajan; those in alto-relievo were amongst the finest I ever saw.

What may have become of these invaluable treasures of art now, I know not.

LETTER LXVII.

THE FARNESINA, THE CORSINI, AND FARNESE PALACES.

YOU may generally form a tolerably correct conjecture of what a gallery will contain, as to subject, before you enter it.

A certain quantity of Landscapes, a great many Holy Families, a few Crucifixions, two or three Pietàs, a reasonable proportion of St. Jeromes, a mixture of other Saints and Martyrdoms, and a large assortment of Madonnas and Magdalens, make up the principal part of all the collections in Rome; which are generally composed of quite as many bad as good paintings, like this at the Corsini Palace.

How much more pleasure there would be in seeing them, if the good were placed apart for your inspection, and you were not sickened and disgusted with the quantity of rubbish you must sift, to find those really worth looking at!

I have been persecuted all this morning with a connoisseur, full of the cant of connoisseurship without one particle of real feeling for the beauties of the art—a man who walks about the world, seeing, and thinking, and feeling, with other peoples' eyes, and understanding, and taste—who does not say what he thinks, but thinks what he shall say—who is, in short a determined dilettanti by rule. But, perhaps, what he is to me I am to you, for, though no connoisseur, I may be sufficiently wearisome; and as one's own sufferings dispose one to pity those of others, I will endeavour to mitigate yours, and give you a very short account of a very large gallery of pictures.

The first we saw was the 'Ecce Homo' of Guercino, a painting which, notwithstanding the painful nature of the subject, and all its hackneyed representations, is full of such deep and powerful expression, is so elevated in its conception, and so faultless in its execution, that it awakens our

highest admiration, and leaves an indelible impression on the mind.

There are two fine portraits, Paul III. when Cardinal Farnese, and Julius II., by Raphael. If the last be an original, it is a *triplicate* at least, for I have seen one at Florence, another at Naples, and another subsequently at Dresden. There is, besides, an admirable Portrait by Giorgione, and a Rabbit, and a Cardinal by Albert Durer; two Cardinals by Domenichino, and a Pope by Velasquez—all good, though Velasquez does not, in this effort, reach his usual excellence in portrait-painting; and Scipione di Gaeta has left a portrait here which would certainly not entitle him to the name of 'the Vandyke of the Roman School.'

Tintoretto's portrait of a Doge, I could not be brought to admire. That most rapid of painters was also the most unequal, and his inequality was unpardonable, because wilful. With more avidity for money than fame, he would paint pictures to any price, and proportion their merit to their cost; and he, who could finish historical pieces faster than others could conceive them,* would throw portraits off his hands that would have disgraced his meanest apprentice. One of the Albanis in this collection, in which Cupid is supplicating Venus to restore his arrows which she has taken from him, is full of grace and beauty.

Murillo's Virgin and Child is a splendid piece of colouring, and nature itself; but there is nothing elevated or ideal in it. Let us fancy it a mother and baby in the lower walks of life, and it will have no fault.

To Caravaggio's Holy Family the same remark applies. There is nothing holy in it; but it is a beautiful painting in its way, and true to nature. Fra Bartolomeo's Holy Family is of a much higher class, and is one of the best of his works in Rome. Many other good, though not first-rate paintings, are dispersed about the rooms; amongst these, a spirited Tiger Hunt, by Rubens, in his best style, caught our attention. There are two beautiful little landscapes by

* He completed his grand composition in the Scuola di Sant' Rocco, before the other artists employed to paint the rest of the hall had half done their sketches. Nobody can judge of Tintoretto out of Venice, any more than of Raphael out of Rome.

Salvator Rosa, without his usual mannerism and blackness. But the real treasures of the collection are the landscapes of Gaspar Poussin; one, in particular, which they call Rinaldo and Armida, certainly has something of the witchery of the enchantress about it, for it charmed me so much, that I returned to the palace again and again to look at it. A Judith with the head of Holofernes, which I saw this morning, reminded me a little of that exquisite painting by Bronzino,* of the same subject, in the Palazzo Pitti at Florence. The extreme calmness and placidity which Judith usually wears after perpetrating a deed of such blood and horror, is surely unnatural and disgusting. Perhaps there is nothing so revolting as the semblance of cruelty in woman. Painters would do well to remember Aristotle's precept to the sex,—"that women should never leave their natural character, nor appear invested with cruelty or boldness."

This palace was the habitation of Christina of Sweden, who certainly did not follow that excellent precept. The room in which she died is distinguished by two columns of yellow-painted wood. This collection of paintings has been formed since her death. So also has the library, which is a very fine one, and possesses a most valuable collection of prints; but I will spare you the description. Do not, however, forget to see it.

With that liberality characteristic of the Italians in every thing relating to literature and the arts, this library is open to the public.

The gardens are quite in the Italian style, very stiff and formal, divided with high evergreen hedges, decorated with bad statues, and furnished with multifarious *giuochi d' acqua*. The war is carried on most successfully against nature and taste; and the grounds are more frightful than you would *a priori* have thought it possible to have made them, beneath such a sky as this.

They extend to the summit of Mount Janiculum; and the view from the Casino at the top is said to be very beautiful, though inferior to that from S. Pietro in Montorio. I will not speak of what I have not seen—accidental circumstances

* His proper name was Cristofano Allori, *detto* il Bronzino,—a title sometimes also given to his brothers, who were painters.

have prevented me from visiting it, but I have no doubt the prospect would amply recompense the toil of the ascent.

The Farnesina.

The Corsini is one of the many uninhabited palaces in the deserted region of Trastevere. Exactly opposite to it, in the long, wide, and grass-grown street of the Lungara, stands the Farnesina, a melancholy Casino, which was originally built for the scene of a grand entertainment, given by a rich Roman banker to Leo X. But it now, unfortunately, belongs to the Royal Family of Naples; and on its damp walls the frescos of Raphael are shut up, and left to moulder in decay.

The first hall was painted by his pupils, but the designs are Raphael's.

These represent the story of Cupid and Psyche; and the whole of that beautiful fable from first to last—from the dawn of passion, through the wrath and machinations of Venus,—the consent at last accorded by Jupiter to the supplications of the enamoured god for the union, the return of Psyche, conducted by Mercury, from her banishment in hell, to the highest heaven, and her presentation with the cup of immortality—till the nuptials are crowned with the banquet of the Gods, and followed by the triumphs of the Loves,—all is told here. It is a complete poem; and I do not hesitate to say, that the beauty, the fancy, the poetic spirit of this wonderful composition, have never been equalled. The red tints of Giulio Romano prevail in the colouring, and prove that he had the chief share in the execution. Raphael himself retouched most parts of it; and the figure of one of the Graces, whose beautiful shoulders and back are turned to us, bears evident marks of his pencil; and it is said, he finished it with great care, and esteemed it one of his happiest paintings.

It is said that Carlo Maratti did not retouch these figures, when he threw behind them the deep blue ground, which certainly injures their fine effect. However this may be,

the Galatea in the next room remains exactly as it was left by the hand of Raphael. He not only designed, but executed it; and faded as is its colouring, that mind must be dead to the highest beauties of painting, that can contemplate it without admiration. The spirit and beauty of the composition, the pure and perfect design, the flowing outline, the soft and graceful contours, and the sentiment and sweetness of the expression, all remain unchanged; for time, till it totally obliterates, has no power to injure them.

The Goddess, standing on her shell, is borne through the waves by two dolphins. Her form, her attitude, and expression, surpass all that your fancy can paint. The figures of the attendant Nereid, and of the triumphant Triton, who embraces her, are beautiful beyond description.

The first of ancient sculptors would have seized the beautiful design and expression of these figures, and transmitted them in their works, for the admiration of all succeeding ages.

Fully to understand the perfection of the design, you should conceive what a beautiful bas-relief or gem it would make.

You are shown a gigantic black head on the wall, which, it is said, Michael Angelo drew one day while he was waiting here for Daniel da Volterra, in derision of the littleness of Raphael's design. This is extremely possible, for he had not the power to portray, nor perhaps to feel, the charm of grace and beauty, or the tenderness of expression. He could not move the gentler feelings of the soul. The bold, the colossal, the terrible, and the sublime, were his; but feminine softness and sentiment, and gentleness and elegance, were unknown to him. These Raphael possessed; but not to these was he confined; for he had elevation, grandeur, dignity, and true sublimity.

There are frescos by Daniel da Volterra, and by Balthazar Peruzzi, in this room; but I dare not give any account of them, for, to confess the truth, though I have returned to the Farnesina times without number, and always with a sincere intention to examine them, I have never yet been able to bestow my attention, except for a transient glance, upon anything but the Galatea of Raphael.

The Farnese Palace.

One little man, the Neapolitan ambassador, inhabits the whole immensity of the Farnese Palace. It would have been impossible to have admired a building, however beautiful, formed out of the overthrown grandeur of the Colosseum; and luckily, although the architecture of Michael Angelo, there is nothing to admire. Indeed, it is some gratification to see that it is quite as ugly as could be desired.

Its proprietors, the kings of Naples, have carried to their kingdom all the ancient sculpture which formerly adorned it; but there is the sarcophagus of Cecilia Metella in the court, and some fine marble statues in an outhouse; and there is what they could not take away, the far-famed gallery, painted in fresco by Annibale Caracci, and for which, after eight years of unremitted labour, that great artist was rewarded by the munificence of Cardinal Farnese, with five hundred crowns!

No one can form a just idea of the powers of Annibale Caracci, without seeing these astonishing frescos; which are in themselves a school of painting.

The first time I ever saw this gallery, was at a ball given by the ambassador, soon after I came to Rome. The gallery was brilliantly lighted up, and my attention was frequently drawn from the beauty of the mortals below to the beauty of the immortals above. Nor were the quadrilles we were dancing on the floor at all to compare to the spirit of the graceful measures the Bacchantes were performing on the ceiling.

It is adorned with the Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne, drawn in their golden cars by tigers, and surrounded by a train of Satyrs, Fauns, and Bacchantes, led on by old Silenus. Classic fable forms the subject of every picture; and their numbers, variety, and beauty, are astonishing. The Triumph of Galatea, and Aurora carrying off her beloved Cephalus in her car, are by Agostino Caracci, whose culti-

vated mind, and poetic imagination, are said to have materially assisted his brother in the composition of the whole.

It is, I believe, a mistake, that their master, Ludovico Caracci, had any share in it, for he never was at Rome, excepting for a few weeks, during the whole time it was painting. The Perseus and Andromeda, and the Nymph and Unicorn, are said to be painted by Domenichino from Annibale Caracci's designs.

I will spare you all further description of these admirable frescos; but I cannot recal them to my memory without delight. I have spent hours in this gallery, and never left it without increased admiration for them.

LETTER LXVIII.

QUIRINAL PALACE—PALAZZO ALBANI—PALAZZO PONIATOWSKI—GEMS—STAIRCASE OF THE PALAZZO RUSPOLI—THE NOZZE ALDOBRANDINI—COLOSSAL FINGER AT PALAZZO ALTIERA—PALAZZO STOPPANI—RAPHAEL'S HOUSE—GUIDO'S AND GUERCINO'S AURORA—VILLA LUDOVISI, ADD PALAZZO ROSPIGLIOSI.

THAT palace-building, ruin-destroying Pope, Paul III., began to erect the enormous palace on the Quirinal Hill; and the prolongation of his labours, by a long series of successive pontiffs, has made it one of the largest and ugliest buildings extant.

The French, during whose reign it was of course the Palazzo Imperiale, new-furnished a part of it; and another part of it, in the expectation of the threatened visit of the Emperor of Austria, was fitted up for that great personage's reception, under the special direction of Cardinal Gonsalvo himself.

I cannot describe silk hangings and rich carpets, neither shall I stop to criticise the Secretary of State's taste as an upholsterer. Our object was to see the paintings; but I was edified to observe in one of the rooms, the consideration of the minister, in providing for his Imperial Majesty's recreation, several suitable diversions. There was a solitaire board, and a little table to play at "fox and geese."

As for the paintings, luckily for you there are not many good ones, and of these I shall mention few. Guercino's Saul and David—or the Madness of Saul, as I believe it is called—is designed with great force and truth; the colouring beautiful, and the expression powerful. It is one of his finest works.

Caravaggio's Christ disputing with the Doctors, merits similar praise.

The sketch of the Transfiguration is very fine. But the striking inferiority in the figure of our Saviour, leads me to doubt that it is, as is said, the original sketch by Raphael himself. I should rather think it a diminished copy by one of his pupils.

Domenichino's Ecce Homo is painfully fine. One of the persecuting Israelites is mocking the suffering Christ, whose brows, crowned with thorns, eyes filled with tears, cheeks stained with drops of blood, and hands bound with cords, are sorrowful to behold.

St. Peter and St. Paul, by Fra' Bartolomeo, are conceived in true grandeur of style. St. Jerome, by Spagnoletto, a subject repeated so often that the sight and sound become at last disgusting, is one of the very best of the few good ones I have seen.

There are some paintings by Carlo Maratti, which I was told to admire; but I could not. The same thing happened when I went to see a painting in the church of S. Carlo al Corso, which is reputed to be his masterpiece. In all his works there is, to me, wondrous insipidity. I never yet saw one that I had any wish to see again.

In a small chapel the altar-piece of the Annunciation, by Guido, is full of beautiful expression, but the drawing is incorrect; and the Virgin's blue mantle breaks all harmony, a charm one rarely misses in his paintings. In the fresco there are some beautiful little cherubs; and the angels in the dome, faded though they be, are still divine; particularly one angel, who is playing on some kind of heavenly instrument, her face raised to heaven, with that beautiful look of more than earthly expression that Guido alone could give, and a beam of light illumining her countenance.

This chapel is, or rather was, entirely painted by Guido,—for it is about time to speak of these departed frescos in the past tense, as they are little better than ghosts now—and there are also some green saints on gold grounds, by Albani, of the merit of which I say nothing; for if an angel were to come down from heaven to paint green figures on gold grounds, I am certain I could not admire the performance.

In one of the rooms, there is the plaster of the beautiful frieze in bas-relief, of the Triumph of Alexander the Great,

modelled for Napoleon, by Thorwaldsen, the first sculptor in relievo, of modern times. It will never now be executed in marble for the Quirinal Palace; but it is to be hoped that the patronage of some other protector of the arts will enable the artist to perpetuate this grand work.

The gardens of the Quirinal Palace are adorned with parterres, planted, not with flowers, but with the Pope's arms and initials, and other pretty devices, formed of little white shells or stones; besides which, there are trees cut into divers shapes; melancholy Casinos, and absurd *giuochi d'acqua*.

Palazzo Albani.

In one of the deserted rooms of the Palazzo Albani, near the Quattro Fontane, there is an ancient painting of Jupiter and Ganymede, in a very uncommon style,—uniting considerable grandeur of conception, great force and decision, and a deep tone of colouring, which produce great effect. It is said to be Grecian.

Among the paintings, most of which are worth nothing, there are two Bacchanalian Feasts, by Giulio Romano, sketched with great spirit; and a wild coarse landscape of Salvator Rosa's; a Holy Family by Albani; another repetition of Raphael's Holy Family at Lord Stafford's and the Doria Palace, purporting also to be an original, but probably a copy by one of his pupils; and two paintings by Pietro Perugino, one of which, a very fine specimen of his works, is composed of four parts, the Nativity in the middle, the Annunciation on each side, and the Crucifixion at the top.

In the court there are some Pagan altars and inscriptions; a fine old mask, and an unknown statue in consular robes.

In the Palazzo Poniatowski, in the Via della Croce, there are some good paintings, chiefly of the Flemish School. But the charm of this palace was, to me, the finest cabinet of gems I had ever seen, which, on the first day of our acquain-

ance with him, Prince Poniatowski had the politeness spontaneously to offer to show to us, though they are very rarely exhibited to strangers.

In the Palazzo Ruspoli, on the Corso, the ground-floor of which has been turned into an immense café, there is a much admired staircase.

On the staircase of the Palazzo Altieri, there is an ancient marble colossal *finger*, of such extraordinary size, that it is really worth a visit. In the Palazzo Verospi, I hear there is a fresco by Albani, which I have not yet seen; and the Palazzo Stoppani, the Palazzo Caffarelli, and the stables of the Palazzo Ghigi, are of the architecture of Raphael, and therefore interesting. Still more so is Raphael's house, built by himself. You pass it on the right-hand side, in going to St. Peter's, very near the Piazza Vaticano, in the widest of the two streets that lead from the castle St. Angelo. It may easily be known, by being the only house in that neighbourhood with a stone front, or with anything like architectural ornament about it.

Before building it, he lived in the Via de' Coronari, in a house, No. 124, which is marked by a washed-out painting on the outside, intended for the portrait of Raphael, and painted by Carlo Maratti.

Palazzo Rospigliosi.

On the roof of the summer-house of the Palazzo Rospigliosi, is painted the celebrated fresco of Guido's Aurora. Its colouring is clear, harmonious, airy, brilliant—unfaded by time; and the enthusiastic admirer of Guido's genius may be permitted to hope, that this, his noblest work, will be immortal as his fame.

Morghen's fine engraving may give you some idea of the design and composition of this beautiful painting; but it cannot convey the soft harmony of the tints, the living touches, the brilliant forms, the realized dream of the imagination, that bursts, with all its magic, upon your enraptured sight in the matchless original. It is embodied poetry. The

Hours, that hand-in-hand encircle the car of Phœbus, advance with rapid pace. The paler, milder forms of those gentle sisters who rule over declining day, and the glowing glance of those who bask in the meridian blaze, resplendent in the hues of heaven,—are of no mortal grace and beauty; but they are eclipsed by Aurora herself, who sails on the golden clouds before them, shedding 'showers of shadowing roses' on the rejoicing earth; her celestial presence diffusing gladness, and light, and beauty around. Above the heads of the heavenly coursers, hovers the morning star, in the form of a youthful cherub, bearing his flaming torch. Nothing is more admirable in this beautiful composition, than the motion given to the whole. The smooth and rapid step of the circling Hours as they tread on the fleecy clouds; the fiery steeds; the whirling wheels of the car; the torch of Lucifer, blown back by the velocity of his advance; and the form of Aurora, borne through the ambient air, till you almost fear she should float from your sight; all realize the illusion. You seem admitted into the world of fancy, and revel in its brightest creations.

In the midst of such youth and loveliness, the dusky figure of Phœbus appears to great disadvantage. It is not happily conceived. Yet his air is noble and godlike, and his free commanding action, and conscious ease, as he carelessly guides, with one hand, the fiery steeds that are harnessed to his flaming car, may, perhaps, compensate in some degree, for his want of beauty; for he certainly is not handsome; and I looked in vain for the youthful majesty of the god of day, and thought on the Apollo Belvedere. Had Guido thought of it too, he never could have made this head, which is, I think, the great and only defect of this exquisite painting; and what makes it of more importance, is, that Apollo, not Aurora, is the principal figure—the first that catches the eye, and which, in spite of our dissatisfaction, we are to the last obliged to contemplate. The defects of his Apollo are a new proof of what I have very frequently observed, that Guido succeeded far better in feminine than in masculine beauty. His female forms, in their loveliness, their delicacy, their grace and sweetness, are faultless; and the beauty and innocence of his infants have seldom been equalled; but he

rarely gave to manly beauty and vigour, a character that was noble.*

From the Aurora of Guido, we must turn to the rival Aurora of Guercino, in the Villa Ludovisi. In spite of Guido's bad head of Apollo, and in spite of Guercino's magic chiar' oscuro, I confess myself disposed to give the preference to Guido. In the first place, there is not the same unity of composition in Guercino's. It is very fine in all its parts; but still it *is* in parts. It is not so fine a *whole*, nor is it so perfect a composition, nor has it the same charm as Guido's. Neither is there the same ideal beauty in the Aurora. Guercino's is a mortal—Guido's a truly ethereal being. Guercino's Aurora is in her car, drawn by two heavenly steeds, and the shades of night seem to dissipate at her approach. Old Tithonus, whom she has left behind her, seems half awake; and the morning star, under the figure of a winged genius bearing his kindled torch, follows her course. In a separate compartment, Night, in the form of a woman, is sitting musing, or slumbering over a book. She has much of the character of a sibyl. Her dark cave is broken open, and the blue sky and the coming light break beautifully in upon her and her companions, the sullen owl and flapping bat, which shrink from its unwelcome ray. The Hours are represented under the figure of children, fluttering about before the goddess, and extinguishing the stars of night—a beautiful idea; but one, perhaps, better adapted to poetry than painting. The Hours of Guercino are, however, infinitely less poetic and less beautiful than the bright female forms which encircle the car of day, in Guido's Aurora. Yet it is a masterpiece of painting; and but for the Aurora of Guido, we could have conceived nothing beyond the Aurora of Guercino.

In another room, in the same Casino, I was struck with

* Domenichino, however, was, in my opinion, the painter that most truly and beautifully represented the graces of childhood. There is a charm of nature, of playful, happy, unconscious innocence about them, that gives dreadful effect to the horrors of his Martyrdoms. In his St. Agnes, and the Mysteries of the Rosaries, at Bologna, (which, after the Communion of St. Jerome, are his great masterpieces of oil painting,) and in his frescos of S. Andrea and S. Sebastiano, at Rome, I was particularly struck with this. The Sleeping Babes of Guido are quite a different description of beauty, but exquisite in their kind.

admiration by a painting I had never heard of, Fame blowing her Trumpet, by Guercino.

The celebrated pieces of ancient statuary, at the Villa Ludovisi, which are invaluable because they are unique—(no other copies of them existing)—are all distinguished by names that have as usual been proved with great learning and at great length, *not* to belong to them; and the names that *do* belong to them have not yet been discovered. You must, therefore, excuse my calling them by their usurped titles. The first is Mars in repose, a beautiful figure. He is sitting with his foot resting on his helmet, his hand grasping a sword, and a shield by his side. A little Love is seated at his feet. The figure is scarcely robust, fiery, or fierce enough for the boisterous god of war, nor does the expression accord with it. It is more like a youthful and a human warrior. It has been called Quirinus; and it seems to accord better with the son of Mars, the godlike founder of Rome, snatched from earth without tasting of death, than with Mars himself. But be it what it may, it is a statue of first-rate excellence. It has been restored by Bernini.

The group called Pætus and Arria, is exquisitely beautiful. She is sinking in death; the last breath of life seems to tremble on her lips, and a faint smile still illumines them. Her form, the perfection of female beauty and grace, is in the most interesting attitude it could be taken; half-clinging in death to him who has just plunged the dagger into his own breast: the blood springs from the wound, and the powerful contrast between the athletic strength of his form,—that strength which we know the death that he has inflicted must so speedily annihilate,—and the expiring figure of the lovely being he supports, is very striking and impressive. Taking the figures separately, they are perhaps faultless; but, considered as a group, it has one fault. In the point of view for the female, you lose the male figure altogether, and the reverse. It is, however, a noble piece of sculpture, whatever it be. It certainly is not Arria and Pætus, because the female figure has a fringed robe, a certain proof that she was of a foreign nation; and because the man has mustachios, which, at that period, were not worn by the Romans; besides, the critics have lately discovered that they are *Theban mustachios!* But in-

dependent of mustachios, the man is too infuriated for Pætus, who, so far from driving the sword into himself in this vengeful manner, was too cowardly to kill himself at all, and was actually executed. It is evident, too, from the expression of the work, that he has stabbed the woman,—and indeed, the wound is in her right shoulder; so that if she had committed suicide, it must have been in a most awkward manner, with her left hand.

The fate of Pætus and Arria was no subject for statuary; but if it had been, the sculptor would have chosen the moment, when, looking up to him with expiring love, she presented the dagger, and murmured, "It is not painful, my Pætus!"

She was the heroine of that beautiful story; but the man is the hero of this group,—the female figure is secondary—therefore, for all those multifarious reasons, it is not Arria and Pætus.

The Theban mustachios have given rise to the supposition that this group represents Hæmon and Antigone, a favourite subject of Greek tragedy, and often seen upon gems; but Hæmon killed himself upon her tomb, therefore he could not be represented thus, as dying with her.

Winkelman imagines that it represents the obscure story of Canace, and that the man is the soldier sent to her by her father, Æolus, on the discovery of her guilt, with the poniard, and the command to kill herself. But this is surely a still more unfortunate idea—for what right have we to suppose that the soldier was foolish enough to kill himself?*

The group called Papirius and his Mother has been, and will be, the subject of continual dispute amongst the connoisseurs. Some of them see, in the boy's face, the roguish mirthful expression of his witty imposition. Winkelman, who at first maintained it to be Phædra and Hippolytus, read in this same mirthful countenance, the excess of horror with which he heard the avowal of her incestuous passion. After-

* Winkelman's gratuitous supposition of this unreasonable suicide is amusing enough.—"Comme aucun écrivain ne fait mention du garde, *nous pouvons nous figurer, par l'inspection de l'ouvrage*, que ce soldat, n'ayant pas été instruit de l'objet de sa mission, remit d'un air triste la fatale épée à Canacé, *ei qu'il s'en est percé le sein, après avoir vu que la Princesse s'étoit tuée.*" A likely story!

wards, he finds it out to be Electra and Orestes; and then the expression of this same 'mirthful,' and 'horror-stricken face,' is changed to extreme affliction; and according to him, "On voit les yeux d'Oreste inondés de larmes, et ses paupières gonflés, à force d'avoir pleuré. Il en est de même d'Electra," &c. It may be so, but I saw none of these expressions in the poor boy's face; and certainly, they cannot *all* be there.

The female is a great deal the taller and older of the two, and the difference in their age seems irreconcileable with that of brother and sister, though Electra was older than Orestes. But she has the air of a matron—he of a boy; and her look and caressing manner would seem to indicate a mother's feeling. But then, say the critics, "her hair is cut, which was esteemed infamous among the Romans; and, therefore, she cannot be the mother of Papirius." Besides, had the boy been Papirius *Prætextatus*, he would have been represented with the *prætexta;* for, it was on the occasion of being invested with that juvenile robe, that he was taken by his father to the senate; and, on his return, he eluded the interrogatories of his mother as to what had passed there, with the tale, that they had been deliberating whether the men should have two wives, or the women two husbands—which sent her, with all her female friends and acquaintance, in a body, next day, to the senate, to implore that the law should be for the women to have two husbands—to the inexpressible amusement of the conscript fathers.

There is another reason why this group cannot represent Papirius and his mother, nor the other, Pætus and Arria, because the ancient sculptors never chose a subject from Roman history.* But it is much easier to prove what it is not, than what it is: we may be content to confess that we know nothing about it; and to call it, for want of a better name, Electra recognizing Orestes.

It is, however, certain that it is a group of singular beauty, and the work of Menelaus, a Grecian sculptor, whose name is inscribed upon it.

We saw the statues and paintings of the Villa Ludovisi only once, and in haste; and we were indebted to the kind-

* Vide Winkelman, Hist. de l'Art, liv. vi., chap. 6, § 28.

ness of Canova, who conducted us there, for seeing them at all. But this privilege is now denied even to him; and the most respectful requests of the most distinguished foreigners, for permission to view them, are treated by Prince Piombino with contemptuous neglect, or answered with haughty refusal. It is not that strangers can intrude upon him, for he resides constantly at Rome. Yet such is his dread lest they should obtain admittance by bribery to see them, that he has been known, on a wet day, to walk under an umbrella, through miry lanes, and watch within sight of the gate—a spy upon his own servants. What would this tyrant have been upon a throne! The only excuse that can be alleged for him is, that he is supposed to be mad; but it is unfortunate when such a madman, instead of being locked up himself, has it in his power to lock up such works of art.

The Villa Ludovisi stands in one of the most beautiful situations in the neighbourhood of Rome, for, though enclosed within the walls of the city, it is completely in the country. The view from the top of the Belvedere Casino is one of the most varied beauty. The blue mountains rising behind the dark shade of the pines and cypress, which form the foreground——but I forget that I must not describe. I see you yawn already.

These pines and cypress are ever green and ever beautiful;—but in all directions of right lines and angles, extend tall hedges of ilex and laurel, clipped into green walls, impenetrably thick, and inconceivably dull. With two miles of pleasure-ground, close to a capital city, on such a soil, and beneath such a sky, what would an English villa and its gardens have been? But gardening, which in our country is the art of creating landscape, is, in Italy, the art of marring it.

In my enthusiasm for the Aurora of Guido, I forgot to mention the paintings of the Rospigliosi Palace.

You are taken, reluctantly, from the contemplation of the Aurora, into an adjoining room in the same Casino, to see Domenichino's Adam and Eve in Paradise—a very poor production indeed. The whole of an immense piece of canvas is crowded with a heterogeneous assemblage of all the birds of the air and beasts of the field, and reptiles

that ever crawled upon the earth; and in the middle of them stand our first parents, in a most unenviable situation.

Some bad bronze heads, and other wretched scraps of sculpture, and a Diana and Minerva, more frightful than any thing you can conceive, are stuck round the room. They were found in the baths of Constantine, upon a part of which this palace was built. Here is a pretty little bronze horse, also found in them—the work, probably, of a better age. The beautiful bas-reliefs which adorn the exterior of the Casino, and are unmercifully exposed to all the injuries of the weather, are of the age of Trajan; and the larger ones are said to have been brought from his Forum. They are placed at such a hight from the ground, that the beauty of the sculpture is lost.

Two magnificent columns of rosso-antico, the only ones of this size in the world, are *judiciously* wedged into the wall of the Casino, and so totally hidden in it, that they would pass unobserved were they not pointed out. If they were made of painted stucco, they would look quite as well, in such a situation, as this precious marble—for the beauty of the material is totally lost.

The palace itself contains a scanty collection of paintings—generally passed over in haste,—for what stranger can view them with patience, before he sees the Aurora? and after it, how can he admire them? Among them, however, are some paintings of considerable merit.

Guido's Andromeda is one of these. It is seldom Guido erred from want of expression, but she is surely too calm, and too placid for such a situation. Neither Perseus winging his flight to her rescue, nor the sea-monster raising its jaws to devour her, seems to have the power to agitate her with hope or fear. But she is beauty's self; and it is a painting that irresistibly forces admiration.

Domenichinos Triumph of David, is not, on the whole, one of his finest compositions. The figures are larger than nature. One of the daughters of Israel, who welcomes him with the harp and the timbrel, has all the living brightness, and beautiful expression, of his pencil.

Samson pulling down the temple on the Philistines, by

Ludovico Caracci, is extremely admired; but the subject is, I think, a peculiarly unfortunate one for painting. The gigantic columns, and tumbling roofs, yielding to the force of a single man of human size, has something in it of revolting impossibility and disproportion.

Eighteen ancient frescos, found in the baths of Constantine, once adorned this palace. They belonged to the Prince Pallavicini, the owner of the second story of this palace. But the servants here say, that the Prince Rospigliosi carried them off with him to Florence, where he now resides; and his servants there maintained they were at Rome. They are not now to be seen or heard of anywhere.

LETTER LXIX.

ROMAN VILLAS — RAPHAEL'S CASINO, AND FRESCOS— BORGHESE GARDENS—ITALIAN AND ENGLISH GARDENING—VILLAS ALDOBRANDINI, ALTIERI, GIRAUD, PAMFILI-DORIA, AND LANTI—FRENCH ACADEMY—UTILITY OF AN ENGLISH ONE—VISIT TO MONTE MARIO—VILLA MADAMA—PASTOR FIDO—RAPHAEL'S FRESCOS.

SINCE I have been in Rome, many are the visits I have paid to the Casino of Raphael, which was the chosen scene of his retirement, and adorned by his genius, It is about half a mile from the Porta del Popolo. The first wooden gate in the lane, on the right of the entrance into the grounds of the Villa Borghese, leads you into a vineyard, which you cross to the Casino di Raffaello; for it still bears his name. It is unfurnished, except with casks of wine, and uninhabited, except by a *contadina*, who shows it to strangers.

We passed through two rooms, painted by his scholars; the third, which was his bedroom, is entirely adorned with the work of his own hands. It is a small pleasant apartment, looking out on a little green lawn, fenced in with trees irregularly planted. The walls are covered with arabesques, in various whimsical and beautiful designs,—such as the sports of children; Loves balancing themselves on poles, or mounted on horseback, full of glee and mirth; Fauns and Satyrs; Mercury and Minerva; flowers and curling tendrils, and every beautiful composition that could suggest itself to a mind of taste, or a classic imagination, in its most sportive mood. It is impossible to describe to you the spirit of these designs. The cornice is supported by painted Caryatides. The coved roof is adorned with four medallions, containing portraits of his mistress, the

Fornarina—it seemed as if he took pleasure in multiplying that beloved object, so that wherever his eyes turned, her image might meet them. There are three other paintings, one representing a Terminus with a target before it, and a troop of men shooting at it with bows and arrows, which they have stolen from unsuspecting Cupid, who is lying asleep on the ground, his quiver empty beside him. One or two roguish-looking Loves are creeping about on the ground, one of them bearing a lighted torch. The marksmen are all bending forward, and some are quite horizontal, with their feet in air.

The second picture represents a figure, apparently a God, seated at the foot of a couch, with an altar before him, in a temple or rotunda; and from gardens which appear in perspective through its open intercolumniations, are seen advancing a troop of gay young nymphs, with something of the air of Bacchantes, bearing on their heads vases full of fresh-gathered roses. I could not make out the image to be a female, or else I should have supposed it to be the feast of Flora; therefore, for want of a better explanation, I concluded it meant for the feast of the God of the Gardens.

The last, and best of these paintings, represents the nuptials of Alexander the Great and Roxana. I never saw a figure of more exquisite loveliness,—more touching modesty and grace. She is seated at the foot of a couch; a little Love beside her is drawing off a veil which yet half conceals her beauty. Hymen, with his saffron robes and torch, leads in Alexander, disarmed, but wearing his helmet. A crowd of attendant Loves are employed in their service; some are carrying off his sword, &c.; and one, a comical little Love, has put on his heavy coat-of-mail, which is ridiculously large for it, and having tumbled down, is unable to get up again.

I have perhaps described with too much minuteness the Casino of Raphael; but in general he painted for others,—here he painted for himself,—and it is interesting to see those sports of his mind, and to trace the fond delight with which he amused his leisure hours in decorating his home, the scene of his pleasures.

Julius Cæsar bequeathed his gardens, at his death, to the

Roman people; the Borghese princes do more,—they give them in their lives; and the only difference I can see in their title to them, and that of every denizen of Rome, is, that the former have the expense of keeping them up, and the latter the enjoyment of them. The citizen enters when he pleases,—on foot, on horseback, or in a carriage; and he is, to all intents and purposes, their uncontrolled master.

A park would be a more appropriate term in English, than gardens, for grounds that occupy nearly three miles in circuit. They are situated on the broad summit of the Pincian Hill, immediately without the walls of Rome, which enclose a part only of its wide and broken extent. The Borghese Gardens are professedly laid out in the English style; and though they certainly are not English, they are—from being devoid of trees clipped into shapes, and long straight avenues enclosed between evergreen walls—by far the most beautiful pleasure-grounds in Rome. I was too much rejoiced to see once more the unmutilated, untortured shades of nature, though ungrouped and unembellished by the hand of taste, to quarrel with the melancholy monotony of the scene,—with the formality of the stagnant pond, in which is erected the Temple of Æsculapius,—the woe-begone Nereids, that are obliged to "sit on rocks, and muse o'er flood and fell,"—the modern ruins that are tumbling about like bad actors, vainly trying to be tragical,—or the mock aqueducts that have been built up only that they might be pulled down.

There is one of the fine arts which is truly of British growth, and in which, by the unanimous voice of Europe, we excel all other nations—the art of gardening. We have attained our perfection in it by the only means in which perfection in any of the fine arts is attainable,—following simplicity, and obeying nature. This is the golden rule of taste. These are the only guides to beauty. But those who have sought it in distorting the lovely features of nature, and substituting the paltry conceits of affectation for beautiful simplicity, have wandered far from their aim. Such have been the means of our success; its remoter causes I cannot but attribute to that fondness for domestic enjoyment which

leads us to embellish everything that surrounds our home, or that can add to its pleasures. Our country-houses, as well as gardens, are confessedly unrivalled; they are the admiration of all enlightened foreigners, and their superiority arises from being contrived, not like those of other nations, for the wonder of visitors, but for the happiness of their inmates,—not for show, but for enjoyment. Long, oh, long may it be the boast of England, that while other lands can show more splendid palaces, hers are filled with happier homes!

It is indeed striking to a native of our wintry island, on coming to a climate where unbidden beauty springs around, and scarcely asks the hand of cultivation, to see, instead of smiling shrubberies, varying walks, scented flowers, budding blossoms, and all the beautiful combinations of English taste,—nothing but clipt evergreens, formal hedgerows, doleful fish-ponds, spirting fountains, and frightful statues. With the sun and the soil of Italy, what a paradise could be created by English gardening!

It does not appear to me that the ancient Romans had a much better taste in gardening than the modern Italians. Pliny, in his laboured description of his Tusculan villa, tells us its gardens were adorned with "figures of various animals, cut in box; evergreens shaped into a thousand different forms; sometimes into letters expressing different names; walls and hedges of clipped box; and trees cut into a variety of shapes;" so what we abuse as Dutch, is really classical. Nothing, however, can make it otherwise than hideous; and, be it the praise of our own nation to have introduced true taste, and invented the art of landscape-gardening.

The drive through the grounds of the Villa Borghese is very pleasant; the road winds along through deep evergreen groves of the ilex, the laurel, and the cypress, whose tall spiral form rises far above every other tree, and contrasts beautifully with the pale and drooping weeping-willows that bathe their flexile branches in the clear waters. But the columnar cypress itself scarcely overtops the majestic pine,* which bears on high its broad horizontal head, and throws around its deep and spreading shade. This beautiful tree, which grows to such perfection in the climates of the south,

* The *Pinus pinea* of Linnæus.

gives to the scenery about Rome its peculiar charm. It has a character that no other possesses; and nothing can be more in harmony with the melancholy grandeur of the ruins it loves to accompany, than its dark and motionless beauty, and its luxuriant depth of shade. It is the same which enters so beautifully into the composition of Claude Lorraine's landscapes. Such scenery as the Borghese Gardens should never be visited except when the sun shines forth unclouded; then the contrast between the brightness of its rays, the deep blue of the heavens, and the thick shade of the groves, is seen in all its beauty.

The Casino, at the extremity of the drive, is well worth seeing; not for anything it contains, for its famous treasures of art are all gone, but for its own magnificence. The splendour of its marbles, and the beauty of its halls, are unimpaired. Instead of its masterpieces of Grecian sculpture, we see now a Curtius on horseback, throwing himself into the gulf; and two groups of Bernini, a scowling David with his sling, and Apollo and Daphne, who is in the act of undergoing the process of her transformation into a laurel. Amongst some paintings of Luca Giordano and Orizonte, I remarked two beautiful winter landscapes by a painter not known to fame, and whose name I have unluckily forgotten.

There are a great many villas in the immediate neighbourhood of Rome, and even within its walls; but I cannot conceive that a particular description of them all could be amusing to you. Every villa has one Casino, and often more, in its grounds. But, perhaps, you may not have a very clear idea of what a Casino is. It is a building, generally two stories high, and containing a suite of entertaining rooms, for company and recreation, but no sleeping-rooms; and they are usually fitted up with all the luxury of painting and sculpture.

The Villa Aldobrandini is now in the possession of General Miollis. The gardens are gay and pleasant, and kept in excellent order. A considerable number of ancient statues and inscriptions are arranged in one part of them. There seemed to be a great multiplication of Bacchuses, Dianas, Mercuries, Venuses, and the common herd of statues; but nothing remarkable, either for rarity or beauty. However, I must

confess that I only gave them a hasty glance, for my whole soul was in the flower-beds. It was silly enough, to be sure; but there was such a delightful profusion of roses and lilies, and jonquils and hyacinths, that when Flora herself, with all her fresh-born beauties, appeared before me, I could not think of musty old representations of the rest of the gods and goddesses; and I was still regaling my senses with their sweets, when the rest of the party returned from the house, where there is a large collection of paintings, and, assuring me there was not one picture worth seeing, dragged me away with them.

In the weed-covered grounds of the Villa Altieri, which are unconscious of flowers, there are some remains of ancient buildings, that have occasioned much dispute among the antiquaries, who have never been able to settle whether they belonged to the *Ludus Matutinus*, or place of exercise for the soldiers—or to public baths that were contiguous to it—or to the Baths of St. Helena, which might have extended here—or to fifty other things.

In an excavation that was made here about the end of the seventeenth century, a chamber was discovered, adorned with arabesques and landscapes; and a very large painting was saved, which was in the collection of Cardinal Massimi, and, I believe, was purchased by the late Lord Bristol.

The deserted and ruinous Casino contains nothing excepting one very small ancient painting of a man and horse,—a common sepulchral device. The design is good, but the colouring faded. The servants say—and they are right—that it was brought from the Tomb of Ovid; but Venuti asserts that it was found in the ruin in the garden.*

On the deserted field of the Esquiline is the Villa Palombara, where the famous Discobolus of the Palazzo Massimi, and the more famous Meleager, are said to have been discovered. It once belonged to Queen Christina of Sweden, who has left upon the little doorway, exactly opposite to the ruin called the Trophies of Marius, a curious record of her credulity. It consists of a collection of unintelligible words, signs, and triangles, given her by some alchymist, as the rule to make gold, and which, no doubt, he had found successful,

* Venuti, parte i. cap. 7.

having obtained from her, and probably many other votaries, abundance of that precious metal in exchange for it. But as she could make nothing of it, she caused it to be inscribed here, in case any passenger, wiser than herself, should be able to develope the mystic signs of this golden secret.

All these villas, and their grounds, are within the walls of Rome; so also is the Villa Mattei, on the Cœlian Hill, now in the possession of the Prince of Peace; whose name, so famous, or rather so infamous in history, has fallen into such insignificance, that his very existence would be forgotten, but for the diurnal rattle of his coach-and-six. One of the pleasures which diversify his retired and monotonous life, seems to be adorning this villa, which he visits every day. His improvements, and the possession of an Egyptian obelisc, and the famous head of Seneca, certainly render it worthy of a visit.

The Villa Giraud in Trastevere, has (O rare invention!) a Casino, built in the shape of a ship of war, which stands most appropriately and pacifically on dry land!

The Villa Pamfili, on Mount Janiculum, commands from its summit a most beautiful prospect; and has in its gardens a theatre of fountains, each of which, when set a-going, performs its part, by spirting out driblets of water; not to mention the glory of the whole, a statue of a Faun, standing in a summer-house, with a barrel-organ hid behind it, and set in motion by water, which grinds music that you are in duty bound to suppose proceeds from the said marble Faun, though he is neither singing nor playing, and the flute in his hand is at arm's-length from his mouth.

The Villa Lanti, also on Janiculum, is rather better worth seeing than these; and it has the rare recommendation of being clean. It was built by Giulio Romano, and it contains four rooms, the ceilings of which are painted, partly by himself, and partly by his pupils, in fresco, with some very pretty arabesques, portraits of Dante, Petrarch, Tasso, Boccaccio, and the Fornarina; and with two fine compositions of Clelia swimming over the Tiber, and the discovery of the Sibyl's books on Mount Janiculum.

The magnificent Villa Medici, almost the only modern villa on the Pincian Hill, the *Collis Hortulorum*—has been

converted into the French Academy, where, at the charge of their own Government, a certain number of young French artists of promise enjoy the inestimable advantages of a few years' study at Rome. I think this institution as honourable to that nation, as the want of it is disgraceful to our own. The illiberality, and the pitiful penurious spirit our government has always manifested in everything relative to the fine arts, form a remarkable contrast to its lavish expenditure in all other respects. The utility of such an academy is too obvious to require comment. Taste and genius are confined to no rank; and, in general, in all countries, men who have attained eminence in the arts, have risen from the middle and lower classes of society. To such men, therefore, in our remote island, poverty will, in most instances, be an insuperable bar to the prosecution of their studies in Italy, without which, I do not hesitate to say, it is not to be expected that they should ever become great artists. Thus, those who the most require such advantages are entirely cut off from them. But this is an ungrateful subject, and I will not enlarge upon it.

To return to the Roman villas—none of which, I think, remain to mention, excepting those upon Monte Mario.*

It was a beautiful day in February, when spring already "purpled all the earth with verdant flowers," and the blossoms of the peach and the nectarine, by the road-side, shed their fragrance through the air, that we ascended Monte Mario, which lies about a mile and a half to the north-west of Rome. The ascent is too steep for a carriage, and we dismounted and walked to the top. It is from this hill that the majesty of the Vatican is seen to most advantage; and from hence, if I were a painter, I would draw it. The summit of Monte Mario is enclosed in the grounds of an old villa, but is fortunately left unmolested in its native carpet of soft green turf, which is canopied by ancient evergreens; and beneath their dark shade, the proud dome of St. Peter's at its base; the windings of the Tiber; Rome, with the distant mountains that bound the Campagna, and the soft purple light which

* Monte Mario, a high hill, about a mile and a half to the north of Rome, is little noticed by classic writers. It is believed to have been anciently the *Clivus Cinnæ*.—Vide Nardini, Roma Antica.

LETTER LXX.

VILLA ALBANI.

THE magnificent galleries and porticos of the Villa Albani are filled with the most precious collection of ancient sculpture that any private cabinet ever contained; and even those great public museums which have been accumulated by the labour of nations and of ages, can scarcely boast any more rare and valuable than this still is; though it has been robbed of many of its choicest treasures.

Its beauty and rarity so strongly excited the cupidity of the French, that, although private property, they had carried off upwards of two hundred pieces of sculpture, and had packed up many more ready for embarkation, when the unexpected reverses of their Emperor drove the plunderers beyond the Alps.

The diminished fortune of their present proprietor, the Prince Albani, rendered him unable to incur the heavy expense of their re-transportation; and the inimitable rilievo of Antinous is the only one that has been brought back.

Impoverished as this museum is, so inexhaustible are its treasures, that I have spent whole mornings in its beautiful cabinets, and reluctantly left them only with the last light of day, without feeling that I have yet sufficiently seen it. Many collections, indeed, are more numerous; but none are so choice. In general, with much that is beautiful, there is more that is bad; even the magnificent halls of the Vatican contain a good deal of very mediocre sculpture; so also does the Capitol, the Gallery of Florence, and that still finer collection, the Studii of Naples. But here there is scarcely a single piece that is not remarkable either for its rarity or beauty, and their intrinsic value is only exceeded by the taste and elegance with which they are arranged. Volumes might and have been written upon this museum. It was

the school of the celebrated Winkelman, and he has left so complete and critical an account of its sculptures,* that it would be the height of presumption in me to particularize them; indeed, I almost feel afraid to speak of them at all, lest I should be led to dwell too long upon what is so interesting in inspection, and so dull in description.

The villa, or casino, in which they are placed, by far the most beautiful building of the kind I have seen at Rome, possesses a light polished elegance, and a decorated beauty, which is truly Italian, and accords with the scene, the climate, and the statuary.

In the principal portico, which is sustained by forty-four magnificent columns of various marbles, stands a line of Emperors; rare bassi-relievi are encased in the walls; Egyptian Sphinxes rest on the marble pavement, and at the far extremity appears Juno Lucina, descending from Olympus to Erebus, bearing her torch; her drapery blown back by the wind—her feet in air—(the whole figure being advanced in front of the lofty pedestal,) and her easy rapid gliding motion through mid-air, are represented with so much art, that the statue actually seems to move. It seems, indeed, to realize the description of the ancient poets, who compare the progress of Juno to that velocity with which thought can traverse distant regions.

The unique statue of Domitian, the only one which has escaped destruction, was found broken, and buried underground, the limbs, head, and body sundered, and hacked all over with the furious blows of axes, (the marks of which are still visible,) proofs of the violence that had been used to destroy every image of the monster whose crimes had disgraced humanity.

Attached to the lower part of the building, are two galleries, chiefly filled with Termine, or Hermes,† of Grecian

* Chiefly in his 'Monumenti Inediti,' and also in the 'Storia dell' Arte.' The reader will find a more than complete catalogue of them in the 'Indicazione Antiquaria,' which contains those taken away.

† It can scarcely be necessary to observe, that all the figures of this description bore originally the head of Mercury, from which they derived their generic name. They were very common among the ancients, and some have supposed that they were even used as posts for gates and fences, about their pleasure-grounds. To their multiplicity

philosophers or poets; many of which are unknown, and many of very doubtful authenticity. The most interesting I saw, were the fine genuine head of Epicurus, the Mercury with the double inscription, and the very ancient and curious Statue of the Priestess of Isis, bearing a sistrum of bronze and marble præfericulum; its fine drapery, of the kind called Etruscan, is more properly of the early Grecian school, and the head bears a close resemblance to those of the Egina marbles.

By far the finest statues in the lower part of the building, are the two exquisitely beautiful Caryatides, representing Grecian Canephoræ, or basket-bearers, carrying their offerings to the temple of Venus or Pallas. They were found on the Appian Way, near the tomb of Cecilia Metella, and must have once adorned some Roman villa or sepulchre. According to the inscriptions upon them, they are the work of Criton and Nicolaus, Grecian sculptors, who are supposed to have come to Rome before the death of Julius Cæsar.

I must pass over the beautiful ancient copies of the Cupid bending his bow, and the Faun of Praxiteles; the two Ptolemies of Egypt,—the unique Nemesis,—the figure of Marsyas suspended to a tree, the living victim of the vengeance of Apollo,—the relievo, in rosso antico marble, of Diogenes in his tub talking to Alexander the Great,—Dædalus forming the wings of of Icarus,—and a thousand other admirable works,—and conduct you to the grand

we owe many heads of the ancients, which would otherwise have been irrecoverably lost. These Termine are nearly of the human height, with heads only; the rest of the marble unformed, and sloping gradually down to the base, as if the man had been immured in a marble case up to the shoulders. In fact, horrible—incredibly horrible as the tale may seem, this fate was once endured by a human being. An unfortunate, but guilty woman, was walled up alive in this manner by her own son, her head only being left at liberty; and fed with bread and water for the space of about thirteen months, when she died. The fact is mentioned in Ginguéné's 'Hist. Littéraire de l'Italie;' although I cannot remember in what part of it. But in many monasteries abroad, and even in England—for instance, in the crypt of Gloucester Cathedral, which anciently belonged to the monasteries—cavities are still shown, fashioned in the wall, apparently intended to immure a human body, the chest and head only being above the wall. Tradition tells of many victims having suffered this horrible fate.

rilievo of Rome Triumphant, guarding the principal entrance.

The pretended statue of Brutus, but more probably of a Roman actor, and several others here, will not detain you long; but the colossal masks, the ancient paintings, the curious mosaics, and the rare bassi-rilievi, which decorate the walls, will greatly impede your progress up the staircase.

In the oval vestibule at the top, between the two noble columns of giallo antico, appears the celebrated and beautiful little statue of the Faun. The grand rilievo represents the Sacrifice of Mithra, an exquisite piece of sculpture; and the ancient marble frieze all the minutiæ of the circus races.

A little room is furnished with singularly beautiful tapestry, executed from designs of the Flemish School, at Rome, by one of Cardinal Albani's own servants, who discovered an uncommon talent for the art, and, encouraged by his master, established a manufactory of it, which has long since perished.

In the most beautiful little apartment (or cabinet, as it is called) that was ever beheld, are contained some of the choicest treasures of art. The beauty of the little bronze statue of the Farnese Hercules, the Pallas, the Diana, the Canopus, the exquisite little Faun with the Thyrsus, the Diogenes, the Expiation of Hercules, the alabaster busts and inimitable bassi-rilievi, are all surpassed by the famous *Apollo Sauroctonos*, which, in the judgment of Winkelman, is the original of Praxiteles, described by Pliny, and the most beautiful bronze statue now left in the world.* It was found in a perfect state upon Mount Aventine, but the trunk of the tree and the lizard are wanting. These are preserved in an ancient copy, said to be very inferior, which was in the Borghese Collection.†

There is a curious little sculpture in emerald *plasm*, (plasma di smeraldo,) a sort of green crystallization, (not,

* Winkelman, Hist. de l'Art, liv. vi. chap. 2. v. 47—50.

† The Borghese Collection was given up by Prince Borghese to the French. The whole, or the greatest part of it, is now in the Louvre.

however, according to mineralogists, bearing any real affinity to the emerald,) said to be the only known specimen in sculpture of this substance.

It is impossible for me to describe to you the richness, delicacy, beauty, and taste, either of this costly cabinet itself, of the next that follows it, or of the great hall. I might tell of ceilings painted by Mengs, of floors paved with pictured mosaics, of walls inlaid with precious alabasters of columns and pilasters of polished porphyry and ancient marbles, of mirrors, of gilding, of niches, and of gems, without end; but I could never convey to you the effect to the eye of such magnificence, united with such taste—of materials so rich, and architecture so beautiful.

In one of the alcoves of this noble hall, stands by far the finest statue of Jupiter I have ever seen; and the other is filled by the finest statue of Minerva in the world, which is pronounced by Winkelman to be the only monument now existing at Rome, of the sublime style of art that lasted from the age of Phidias to that of Praxiteles.* It is in perfect preservation,—fresh as when it first issued from the sculptor's hands. Nothing can exceed the majesty of the figure, nor the exquisite grace of the drapery. There is a peculiarity in the Ægis and helmet, which has given rise to much learned and tedious discussion.

I must pass over, unnoticed, the four beautiful bassi rilievi in this magnificent hall, of Marcus Aurelius, the Choice of Hercules, Icarus and Dædalus, and Bellerophon holding Pegasus—though hours may well be spent in examining them—and conduct you into a little sitting-room, in the marble chimney-piece of which is fixed the far-famed rilievo of Antinous, crowned with lotus flowers. If the Minerva be a monument of the 'style sublime,' this is incontestably a specimen of the 'beau style' of art, which began with Praxiteles, and lasted until the decline of taste once more introduced imitation of the Egyptian. The characteristic of the 'beau style' was grace,—but "Grace,"

* Hist. de l'Art, liv. iv. chap. 6. § 28. Besides this Minerva, Niobe and her Children are the only other sculptures Winkelman classes as works of this epoch "*du style sublime.*"

says Winkelman, "as revered by the ancients, was of two kinds,—the one of celestial, the other of human birth,"—one, "the companion of the gods, the divine offspring of heaven, addresses itself to the mind rather than the eye, conceals itself in the inmost recesses of the soul, and reveals itself only to gifted genius. It was this grace which inspired Phidias."* The second grace, the humble and earth-born companion of the other, gives to beauty its charm, and alone deigns to visit the modern masters of art. But the great masters of the 'bean style' associated the first grace with the second;—and there can surely be no better instance of their union, (the Apollo Belvedere excepted,) than in this exquisite fragment of sculpture, which, it is no exaggeration to say, we can return to gaze at for ever with unwearying admiration. It is supposed to have formed a part of the Apotheosis of Antinous; the hand, in which the restorer has now placed a garland of flowers, seems, from its position, to have held the reins, and the figure to have been placed in a car of triumph, in which manner the ancients represented the elevation of their heroes to gods, as commonly as borne on the wings of the eagle. "As fresh, and as highly-finished, as if it had just left the studio of the sculptor, this work, after the Apollo and the Laocoon, is, perhaps, the most beautiful monument of antiquity which time has transmitted to us."† I could not but feel as if it had been treated with degradation, in being stuck into a common chimney-piece.

I shall conclude by mentioning the famous Thetis, so long an ornament of this museum, which was carried off by the French to adorn the Louvre. It was originally discovered by Cardinal Albani, in making an excavation at the Villa of Antoninus Pius, at Lanuvium, "but it is assuredly a work of a date far anterior to that age, and undeniably one of the most beautiful figures of antiquity."‡

From the attitude—an oar in the left hand, resting on a Triton, and one of the legs a little raised, as if riding on the prow of a vessel—it is conjectured to represent Thetis, though

* Hist. de l'Art, liv. iv. chap. 6. § 30, 37, &c.
† Ibid., liv. vi. chap. 7. § 28. ‡ Ibid. § 39.

it may be the Cnidian Venus, surnamed the Venus of prosperous navigation. Winkelman goes into ecstasies about it. "In no female statue," he exclaims, "scarcely even in the Venus de' Medicis, do we see, as in this, *la fraicheur et l'innocence de la plus tendre jeunesse*," &c. and yet this statue, with all the "bloom of tender youth," had no head! But he supplies the want with a head like a rose-bud.—"Upon this beautiful body," he adds, "*l'imagination aime à placer une tête semblable à un bouton de rose qui commence à s'épanouir*," &c. The head which the restorer has placed upon it, is not in the least like a rose-bud; but when a fine ancient statue has but an indifferent modern head, which often happens, the best way is to look at it as if it had none. The raptures, however, into which Winkelman is thrown by this head, which he sees only in imagination, are nothing to the transports excited by the body which he actually beholds; and he hopes "he may be forgiven for believing, that the poets of Greece alluded to this very statue, when they spoke of the limbs of Thetis, as the model of beauty. "The man of genius," he proceeds, "at the sight of this beautiful Nereid, transported beyond the time of Homer, sees Thetis rising from the bosom of the ocean—before she was sensible to the love of any mortal—before her union with Peleus was thought of—before her youthful charms had kindled the passion of the three gods—before even the first ship had cut the waves of the Ægean sea; for the prow on which she rests her foot, is only an attribute to make her known."*

He goes on in this way through several pages. What he did not do well, I cannot hope to do better. Perfection in art, is, indeed, indescribable. All we can learn from the most ingenious description by the man of taste and genius, or the critic of judgment and discernment, is, that the thing described must be something very pretty. Such the Thetis certainly is, as all who have seen the original, now at Paris, or the cast at Rome, must allow.

If I were to enumerate all the sculptures in the smaller casinos, porticos, billiard-rooms, café, &c., which, however, are in general inferior to those of the great building, I

* Hist. de l'Art, liv. vii. chap. 7. § 40.

should but vainly try to give you an idea of the treasures of this museum,—of the beautiful statues I have left wholly unmentioned, of the curious mosaics, the ancient paintings, the bronzes, the inscriptions, the marble columns, the vases the sarcophagi, and the innumerable and inestimable bassi-rilievi, which adorn this wonderful temple of art. The hours of pleasure I have spent within it are over. This very day I have visited it for the last time, and its remembrance is all that is left me.*

* I ought to have mentioned, what Winkelman pronounces to be one of the six finest bas-reliefs in the world,—the Marriage of Peleus and Thetis; but I grieve to say that, by some unfortunate chance, in all my visits to the Villa Albani, I never saw this remarkable piece of sculpture, if indeed it still remains there.

LETTER LXXI.

The Pope.—Pius VII.

To-day we were presented to the Pope in a summer-house of the Vatican gardens, where he went to receive us; for his Holiness may not admit a female within the sanctuary of his palace. Now, to my thinking, his stealing in this private manner into the garden to meet ladies, according to a previous assignation, wears a much more equivocal appearance, and might, indeed, give rise to much scandal.

Five o'clock was the hour fixed for the interview; and we had just arrived at the indicated summer-house, which contains two good carpeted drawing-rooms, when, "punctual as lovers to the moment sworn," the Pope entered, took off his large round red hat, and, severally bowing to each of us, passed on into the inner room, whither we were conducted by Cardinal * * *, and presented. But, alas! here the similitude failed—the natural order of things was reversed—for instead of the Pope, like an impassioned lover, dropping down on his knees to us, it was our business to kneel to him.

This, however, his holiness, being apprised of our being "*Lutherani*," would by no means allow. Instead of his toe, we kissed his hand, which ceremony being performed, he seated us beside him, and chatted with us very pleasantly for above half an hour—told us about old times and old stories, and all he used to do when he was a *ragazzo*. "Like all other old people," he said, laughing good-humouredly, "he thought all things were changed for the worse. The very seasons were changed, opinions were changed, times were changed."—"*Tutto è mutato: prima le teste, e poi gli tempi: sopra tutto son mutato io*," continued he, laughing; and he drew a very droll picture of what he was when a mischievous little urchin

He was polite enough to choose to think "it was scarcely possible we could be English, though he had heard so—we spoke Italian so well; and could hardly believe we had only been a few months in Italy. He said he particularly disliked speaking French—he supposed because he spoke it particularly ill; but, indeed, he had little reason to like anything French." Seizing upon this opening, we made some remarks on the occupation of Italy by the French, which drew from him a most energetic picture of the miseries which they had brought upon this unhappy land—of the wrongs they had committed, and the curse they had entailed upon it. "You see it now," he added, "a changed country, exhausted and bleeding under the wounds of its enemies. Their rapacity, not content with despoiling it of its ornaments, has robbed it of its prosperity, and of that spirit of internal peace and concord, which no time can restore."

He spoke of Venice, his native state, of its flourishing condition before they seized it—of the rapid destruction to which it has ever since been hastening.

I happened to observe, how fortunate it was that they had been compelled to restore all they had plundered from Rome (meaning works of art). "All!" he exclaimed—"What! have they restored the blood they have spilt—the wealth they have squandered—the morals they have corrupted? Have they restored the noble families they reduced to beggary—the sons to the mothers they rendered childless—the husband to the widow?"

When venerable age is roused to the energy and emotion we expect only from youth—when the quenched eye lightens, and the hoary locks are shook with the bitter sense of wrongs and regrets, there is something sacred in its feelings, which commands our respect and awe.

This burst of feeling over, he spoke of the French with that mildness of spirit, which is the governing principle of his truly christian character. "In sorrow more than anger" he seemed to look on the past; and throughout, that indescribable something far stronger than words—in the tone, eye, mind, and gesture, made us feel that it was abhorrence of injustice, violence, oppression, and impiety, and not the sense of personal injury and insult, that moved the virtuous

indignation of this venerable old man; whose meekness, patience, and humility, have through life been his most characteristic qualities.

We retired with his blessing, and an invitation to return again, which we are told is, as well as the length of our interview, very rare. Accordingly, we were much flattered. The honour of having him all to ourselves—for even the Cardinal retired—was, however, I believe, purely accidental. In general he holds a female levée, and receives all at once. Everybody is desired to be dressed up to the throat, and to wear a veil, which is however, almost always thrown back. Some of our very scrupulous countrywomen have declined presentation to the Pope, because it goes against their consciences to call him 'vostra Santità.' There are certainly some people who strain at a gnat and swallow a camel.

I forgot to answer one of your queries. You tell me that you hear the Pope is a bigot. I can only tell you, in proof of his liberality, that he permits the English to have regular public worship, according to the rites and service of our own heretical church; and that during three successive winters, we have had a set of rooms openly hired for the express purpose. I cannot exactly say that he gave his consent; for when it was asked, he rather signified that it might be as well to do without it.

If the spirit of Martin Luther could look down, he would surely rejoice to see his own tenets and doctrines openly preached in the very city which would have burnt him for holding them.

This toleration of Lutheranism is, however, an unprecedented circumstance; and some of the cardinals are extremely scandalized with this unhallowed license, and even pretend ignorance of it. To those to whom I know it is peculiarly obnoxious, I have a mischievous pleasure in introducing the subject, as if by chance; for instance, at the conversazione on Sunday evenings, complaining of the rooms having been too much crowded in the morning during the English service, or lamenting that we were likely soon to lose one of our best clergymen, &c., &c.,—or remarking, as if in compliment, the liberal policy of the court of Rome, in now permitting the exercise of our religion, almost as freely as we allow of theirs.

LETTER LXXII.

PROCESSION TO THE MINERVA—PALM SUNDAY.

ROME is full of pilgrims, who, with their staves, their scrips, their cockle-shells, their oil-skin tippets, and their large slouched hats, remind one more of days of yore and tales of romance, than anything one could have expected to have seen realized in the nineteenth century.

It is also crowded with much less picturesque objects,—carriages full of bewildered *forestieri*, driving about and seeking for a place wherein to lay their heads, in vain. Every hotel and lodging is full, even to overflowing, with curious heretics; every church is crowded with devout Romans; and every pulpit resounds with the stentorian voice of some friar, denouncing, with all the vehemence of Italian energy and gesticulation, the horrors of hell, and demonstrating that his congregation are in the fair way to tumble into that fiery abyss. A preacher has not the smallest chance of popularity here, who does not frighten his auditors out of their senses. Even in the open piazzas, these zealous friars raise their crucifix, and hold forth to the gaping multitude.

Frequent processions of penitents, covered with long dark robes, which pass over the head, and have holes cut for the eyes, girded round the waist with ropes, preceded by a large black cross, and bearing skulls, and bones, and begging-boxes for the souls in purgatory, are to be seen passing in silence along the streets, or gliding through the solitude of the Colosseum, or beneath the Triumphal Arches and ruins of ancient Rome. A party of these mysterious-looking figures that I saw yesterday emerging from the Arch of Titus, and entering the Colosseum, where they knelt in silence and in deep prayer upon its once blood-stained, area before the altars of the Via Crucis, had a very striking

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[illegible] TO [illegible] MINER[illegible]—PALM SUNDAY.

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PROCESSION OF PENITENTS.

effect. All these are forerunners of the Holy Week, to which immense multitudes still flock from all parts; though now, I believe, more from curiosity than piety, and for amusement than penitence. A real penance, however, it has proved to me; and if I were to live in Rome for fifty years, I would never go through it again; though I am glad that I have seen it once—now that it is over. Before the Holy Week our sufferings began; we were disturbed the very morning after our return from Naples, with the information that it was a grand festa—the Festa of the Annunciation, and that a grand *funzione* was to take place at the church of Santa Maria Sopra Minerva, preceded by a still more superb procession—and that we must get up to see it, which we accordingly did; and drove through streets lined with expecting crowds, and windows hung with crimson and yellow silk draperies, and occupied by females in their most gorgeous attire, till we made a stop near the church, before which the Pope's horse-guards, in their splendid full-dress uniforms, were stationed to keep the ground; all of whom, both officers and men, wore in their caps a sprig of myrtle, as a sign of rejoicing. After waiting a short time, the procession appeared, headed by another detachment of the guards, mounted on prancing black chargers, who rode forward to clear the way, accompanied by such a flourish of trumpets and kettle-drums, that it looked like anything but a peaceable or religious proceeding. This martial array was followed by a bare-headed priest, on a white mule, bearing the Host in a gold cup, at the sight of which everybody,—not excepting our coachman, who dropped down on the box,—fell upon their knees, and we were left alone, heretically sitting in the open barouche.

The Pope, I understand, used formerly to ride upon the white mule himself; whether in memory of our Saviour's entrance into Jerusalem on an ass or no, I cannot say; and all the cardinals used to follow him in their magnificent robes of state, mounted either on mules or horses; and as the *Eminentissimi** are, for the most part, not very eminent

* *Eminentissimo* is the title by which a Cardinal is addressed in conversation.

horsemen, they were generally tied on, lest they should tumble off. This cavalcade must have been a very entertaining sight. I understand that Pius VI., who was a very handsome man, kept up this custom, but the present Pope, Pius VII., is far too infirm for such an enterprise; so he followed the man on the white mule in his state coach; at the very sight of which we seemed to have made a jump back of two hundred years at least. It was a huge machine, composed almost entirely of plate-glass, fixed in a ponderous carved and gilded frame, through which was distinctly visible the person of the venerable old Pope, dressed in robes of white and silver, and incessantly giving his benediction to the people, by a twirl of three fingers—which is typical of the Trinity.

On the gilded back of this vehicle, the only part I think that was not made of glass, was a picture of the Pope in his chair of state, and the Virgin Mary *at his feet*. This extraordinary machine was drawn by six black horses, with superb harness of crimson velvet and gold; the coachmen, or rather postilions, were dressed in coats of silver tissue, with crimson velvet breeches, and full-bottom wigs well powdered, without hats.

Three coaches, scarcely less antiquely superb, followed with the assistant cardinals, and the rest of the train. In the inside of the church, the usual tiresome ceremonies went on which take place when the Pope is present. He is seated on a throne, or chair of state; the cardinals, in succession, approach and kiss his hand, retire one step, and make three bows or nods, one to him in front, one on the right hand, and another on the left; which, I am told, are intended for him, (as the personification of the Father,) and for the Son, and for the Holy Ghost, on either side of him; and all the Cardinals having gone through these motions, and the inferior priests having kissed his toe—that is, the cross embroidered on his shoe—high mass begins. The Pope kneels during the elevation of the Host, prays in silence before the high altar, gets up and sits down, reads something out of a great book which they bring to him with a lighted taper held beside it (which must be eminently useful in broad daylight); and, having gone through many

more such ceremonies, finally ends as he began, with giving his benediction with three fingers, all the way as he goes out.

During all the time of this high mass, the Pope's military band, stationed on the platform in front of the church, played so many clamorous martial airs, that it would have effectually put to flight any ideas of religious solemnity—if any there had been.

The Pope, on this day, gives to a certain number of young women a marriage-portion of fifty crowns, or sometimes more. Such of them as choose to become the spouse of heaven, carry it to a convent, in which case it is always a larger sum. We expected to have seen them walk in the procession, but it seems the practice has fallen into disuse, and they did not appear; probably because the Pope used formerly to portion from one to two hundred young girls; but now that his finances are reduced, the number is necessarily more limited. We heard contradictory accounts of the numbers portioned to-day; the highest statement was between seventy and eighty.

This exhibition over, we had luckily no more processions to see till Palm Sunday came, which, at half-past eight o'clock, beheld us seated in the Sistine Chapel, where we waited a full hour before the Pope made his appearance. At last he entered, attired in a robe of scarlet and gold, which he wore over his ordinary dress, and took his throne. The Cardinals, who were at first dressed in under-robes of a violet-colour, (the mourning for Cardinals,) with their rich antique lace, scarlet trains, and mantles of ermine, suddenly got quit of these accoutrements, and arrayed themselves in most splendid vestments, which had the appearance of being made of carved gold. The tedious ceremony of each separately kissing the Pope's hand, and making their three little bows, being gone through, and some little chanting and fidgeting about the altar being got over, two palm branches, of seven or eight feet in length, were brought to the Pope, who, after raising over them a cloud of incense, bestowed his benediction upon them. Then a great number of smaller palms were brought, and a Cardinal, who acted as the Pope's aide-de-camp on

this occasion, presented one of these to every Cardinal as he ascended the steps of the throne, who again kissed the Pope's hand and the palm, and retired. Then came the Archbishops, who kissed both the Pope's hand and toe, followed by the inferior orders of clergy, in regular gradations, who only kissed the toe, as they carried off their palms.

The higher dignitaries being at last provided with palms, the Deacons, Canons, Choristers, Cardinals' train-bearers, &c., had each to receive branches of olive, to which, as well as to the palms, a small cross was suspended. At last, all were ready to act their parts, and the procession was drawn up in readiness to move. It began with the lowest in clerical rank, who moved off two by two, rising gradually, till they came to Prelates, Bishops, Archbishops, and Cardinals, and terminated by the Pope, borne in his chair of state (*sedia gestatoria*) on men's shoulders, with a crimson canopy over his head. By far the most striking figures in the procession were the Bishops and Patriarchs of the Armenian church. One of the latter wore a white crown, and another a crimson crown glittering with jewels. The mitres of the Armenian Bishops were also set with precious stones; and their splendid dresses, and long wavy beards of silver whiteness, gave them a most venerable and imposing appearance.

The procession issued forth into the Sala Borgia (the hall behind the Sistine Chapel,) and marched round it, forming nearly a circle; for, by the time the Pope had got out, the leaders of the procession had nearly got back again; but they found the gates of the chapel closed against them, and on admittance being demanded, a voice was heard from within, in deep recitative, seemingly inquiring into their business, or claims for entrance there. This was answered by the choristers from the procession in the hall; and after a chanted parley of a few minutes, the gates were again opened, and the Pope, Cardinals, and Priests returned to their seats. Then the Passion was chanted; and then a most tiresome long service commenced, in which the usual genuflections, and tinkling of little bells, and dressings, and undressings, and walking up and coming down the steps of the altar, and bustling about, went on; and which at

last terminated in the Cardinals all embracing and kissing each other, which is, I am told, the kiss of peace.

You must be nearly as tired with this account of this long *funzione* as I was of seeing it, and it is quite impossible you can be more so.

The procession would really have been worth seeing, if it had taken place in St. Peter's church instead of this confined little chapel and hall, in which, from the crowding and squeezing, the fine dresses and palm branches, and all the pomp of the pageant, lost their effect.

The palms are artificial, formed of straw or the leaves of dried reeds, plaited so as to resemble the real branches of the palm-tree, which are used in this manner for this ceremony, in Roman Catholic colonies in tropical climates. These artificial palms, however, are topped with some of the real leaves of the palm-tree, brought from the shores of the Gulf of Genoa.

LETTER LXXIII.

THE HOLY WEEK—THE MISERERE—HOLY THURSDAY—PROCESSIONS—THE INTERMENT OF CHRIST—SEPULCHRAL ILLUMINATIONS OF THE PAOLINA CHAPEL—THE WASHING OF FEET—THE SERVING AT TABLE—THE PENITENZA MAGGIORE—THE CROSS OF FIRE—THE ADORATION BY THE POPE AND CARDINALS—THE RELICS—ILLUMINATED SEPULCHRE OF CHRIST AT SAN ANTONIO DE' PORTOGHESI—CONCERT OF SACRED MUSIC.

WE enjoyed three days' relaxation from the toils of the Holy Week; for we did not go to see the body of St. Joseph of Arimathea at St. Peter's on Tuesday, which we might have done; but on Wednesday evening, in our impatience to secure places for the first Miserere in the Sistine Chapel, we went at three o'clock, and sat waiting nearly an hour and and a half, before the service commenced. Even at that hour, however, the gentlemen had difficulty enough in finding standing room, so great was the pressure in the confined space allotted to them. Many were unable to get in for want of room; and many were turned back, for presenting themselves in boots or trowsers, instead of silk stockings; for no man may attend this service of religion and penitence unless he be dressed as if going to a ball; and if he has and description of military uniform, it is highly expedient for him to wear it.

The seats for the ladies are at the lower end of the chapel, where we are caged up behind a gilded grate, like so many wild beasts; being accounted almost as mischievous among Popes and Cardinals. We were all dressed, according to his Holiness's taste, in black, and with veils; and I am told we looked like a sisterhood of nuns through the grate.

An elevated place, called the Tribune, appropriated for kings and the princes of royal blood, was occupied by the old ex-King and Queen of Spain, Prince Henry of Prussia, the Queen and young King of Etruria, the Duke and Duchess of Genoa, the Prince Carignano, the young heir of Turin, and several other sprigs of fresh budding, or blighted royalty. Behind them sat the foreign ambassadors all in a row.

When at last the service, which the Italians call the *Mattutino delle Tenebre*, did commence, nothing could exceed my disappointment. It was in no degree superior to the most ordinary chant of a Catholic church; and finding nothing in it to occupy me, I amused myself with watching the ill-concealed drowsiness of many of the Cardinals, who, having just risen from dinner, seemed to have the greatest difficulty in refraining from taking their customary siesta. Though broad day-light, there was a row of candles of mourning wax (of a dark brown, or purple colour) ranged upon the top of our grate, the utility of which was not very apparent, as they were extinguished before it grew dark. There were also fifteen similar mourning candles, erected on high beside the altar, which, I was given to understand, represented the Apostles and the three Marys, rising gradually in height to the central one, which was the Virgin. As the service proceeded, they were put out one by one, to typify the falling off of the Apostles in the hour of trial; so that at last they were all extinguished, except the Virgin Mary, who was set under the altar.

The shadows of evening had now closed in, and we should have been left almost in total darkness, but for the dull red glare which proceeded from the hidden lights of the unseen choristers, and which, mingling with the deepening twilight, produced a most melancholy gloom.

After a deep and most impressive pause of silence, the solemn Miserere commenced; and never by mortal ear was heard a strain of such powerful, such heart-moving pathos. The accordant tones of a hundred human voices—and one which seemed more than human—ascended together to heaven for mercy to mankind—for pardon to a guilty and sinning world. It had nothing in it of this earth—nothing

that breathed the ordinary feelings of our nature. It seemed as if every sense and power had been concentred into that plaintive expression of lamentation, of deep suffering and supplication, which possessed the soul. It was the strain that disembodied spirits might have used who had just passed the boundaries of death, and sought release from the mysterious weight of woe and the tremblings of mortal agony that they had suffered in the passage of the grave. It was the music of another state of being.

It lasted till the shadows of evening fell deeper, and the red dusky glare, as it issued stronger from the concealed recess whence the singing proceeded, shed a partial but strong light upon the figures near it.

It ceased—a priest with a light moved across the chapel, and carried a book to the officiating Cardinal, who read a few words in an awful and impressive tone.

Then, again, the light disappeared, and the last, the most entrancing harmony arose, in a strain that might have moved heaven itself—a deeper, more pathetic sound of lamentation, than mortal voices ever breathed.

Its effects upon the minds of those who heard it, was almost too powerful to be borne, and never—never can be forgotten. One gentleman fainted, and was carried out; and many of the ladies near me were in agitation even more distressing, which they vainly struggled to suppress.

It was the music of Allegri; but the composition, however fine, is nothing without the voices who perform it here. It is only the singers of the Papal chapel who can execute the Miserere. It has been tried by the best singers in Germany, and totally failed of effect.

There is never any accompaniment, though at times the solemn swell of the softened organ seemed to blend with the voices.

This music is more wonderful, and its effect more powerful, than any thing I could have conceived.

At its termination, some loud strokes, that reverberated through the chapel, and are intended, I was told, to represent the veil of the Temple being rent in twain, closed the service.

With Holy Thursday our miseries began.

On this disastrous day we went before nine to the Sistine Chapel—after sitting an hour, saw the Pope enter—witnessed the Cardinals' kissing of hands, and priests' kissing of toes, as usual—underwent the same tiresome repetition of mass—and beheld a procession, led by the inferior orders of clergy, followed up by the Cardinals in superb dresses, bearing long wax-tapers in their hands, and ending with the Pope himself, who walked beneath a crimson canopy, with his head uncovered, bearing the Host in a box; and this being, as you know, the real flesh and blood of Christ, was carried from the Sistine Chapel, through the intermediate hall, to the Paolina Chapel, where it was deposited in the sepulchre prepared to receive it, beneath the altar. The ceremony of the deposition we did not witness; for the moment the Pope entered, the doors of the chapel were closed.

I never yet could learn, why Christ was to be buried before he was dead; for, as the crucifixion did not take place till Good Friday, it seems odd to inter him on Thursday. His body, however, is laid in the sepulchre, in all the churches of Rome in which this rite is practised, on Thursday forenoon; and it remains there till Saturday at mid-day, when, for some reason best known to themselves, he is supposed to rise from the grave, amidst the firing of cannon, and blowing of trumpets, and jingling of bells—which have been carefully tied up since the dawn of Holy Thursday, lest the devil should get into them. But I am anticipating. The moment the Pope left the Paolina Chapel, the gates were thrown open. Nothing could exceed the brilliancy of its illumination, which lasted as long as the body lay in the tomb. During these two days and nights, hundreds, clad in deep mourning, were continually kneeling, in silence the most profound, and in devotion the most fervent, around the illuminated sepulchre of their crucified Redeemer, over which they wept in anguish of spirit. I have entered it on tiptoe again and again, amidst the most awful silence, and heard no sound but the sigh of penitence.

It was a cruel sight to see these thousands of sepulchral tapers blackening the frescos of Michael Angelo; and yet I

don't know how they can reasonably be objected to, since he himself planned their arrangement.

We did not wait for the re-opening of the chapel at present, nor for the benediction the Pope was afterwards to give from the balcony of St. Peter's, knowing it would be repeated on Sunday; but hurried away to endeavour to get places in the Sala della Lavatura, to see the washing of feet.

It was not, however, till after great exertions on the part of the gentlemen of our party, and after being nearly pressed to death in the most terrible squeeze I ever encountered, that we found ourselves in the hall, which was already crowded almost to suffocation; and, completely exhausted, and scarcely half alive, we were placed upon the raised steps reserved for ladies, exactly opposite to the pilgrims, or rather priests, whose feet the Pope was to wash.

The ceremony is instituted in commemoration of our Saviour's washing the feet of the apostles; but here there were thirteen instead of twelve. The odd one is the representative of the angel that once came to the table of twelve that St. Gregory was serving; and though it is not asserted that the said angel had his feet washed, or indeed did anything but eat, yet as the Pope can hardly do less for him than the rest, he shares in the ablution as well as the repast.

The twelve were old priests, but the one who represented the angel was very young. They were all dressed in loose white gowns, with white caps on their heads, and clean woollen stockings, and were seated in a row along the wall, under a canopy. When the Pope entered and took his seat at the top of the room, the whole company of them knelt in their places, turning towards him; and on his hand being extended in benediction, they all rose again and reseated themselves.

The splendid garments of the Pope were then taken off; and, clad in a white linen robe which he had on under the others, and wearing the bishop's mitre instead of the tiara, he approached the pilgrims, took from an attendant Cardinal a silver bucket of water, knelt before

the first of them, immersed one foot in the water, put water over it with his hand, and touched it with a square fringed cloth; kissed the leg, and gave the cloth, and a sort of white flower, or feather, to the man; then went on to the next. The whole ceremony was over, I think, in less than two minutes, so rapidly was this act of humility gone through. From thence the Pope returned to his throne, put on his robes of white and silver again, and proceeded to the Sala della Tavola, whither we followed, not without extreme difficulty, so immense was the crowd. The thirteen priests were now seated in a row at the table, which was spread with a variety of dishes, and adorned with a profusion of flowers. The Pope gave the blessing, and, walking along the side of the table opposite to them, handed each of them bread, then plates, and, lastly, cups of wine. They regularly all rose up to receive what he presented; and the Pope having gone through the forms of service, and given them his parting benediction, left them to finish their dinner in peace. They carry away what they cannot eat, and receive a small present in money besides.

The ceremonies of this morning, which we were nearly pressed to death to obtain a sight of, in my humble opinion, are not in the least worth seeing. Those, on the contrary, which we witnessed in the evening, were attended with no difficulty, and were, in all respects, highly interesting. I chiefly allude to the divine Miserere in the Sistine Chapel, which was, if possible, finer than that of the preceding day. Before we went up to hear it, (about four o'clock,) we stopped at St. Peter's to see the Penitenza Maggiore, a Cardinal, who is armed with powers to give absolution for crimes which no other priest can absolve, and who sits on the evenings of Holy Thursday, and Good Friday, in the great Confessional of St. Peter's.

A man was on his knees at confession when we were there, whose face, of course, we could not see. The Cardinal had unceasing employment in touching with his long white wand, the heads of those who knelt before him for this purpose, and who thereby receive great spiritual be-

nefit. Yesterday he sat at the same hour in the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore.

The effect of the blazing cross of fire suspended from the dome above the Confession, or tomb of St. Peter's, was strikingly brilliant at night, when, at the conclusion of the Miserere, we descended into the church, whose immense expanse was thoroughly illuminated with its resplendent brightness. The Cross is covered with innumerable lamps, which have the effect of one blaze of fire. Though eighteen feet in length, its proportion to the immensity of St. Peter's is so small that it looked like a minute ornamental cross, such as a lady might wear round her neçk; and its diminutiveness disappointed us all. The whole church was thronged with a vast multitude, of all classes and countries, from royalty to the meanest beggar, all gazing upon this one object.

In a few minutes, the Pope and all the Cardinals descended into St. Peter's, and room being kept for them by the Swiss Guards, the aged Pontiff, whose silver hairs shaded his pale and resigned head, prostrated himself in silent adoration before the cross of fire. A long train of Cardinals knelt behind him, whose splendid robes and attendant train-bearers formed a striking contrast to the humility of their attitude. Three abdicated monarchs knelt beside them,—the aged King of Spain, the poor blind King of Sardinia, in the simple garb of a Jesuit, and the King of Holland, (Louis Buonaparte), in the dress of the plainest citizen; the young King of Etruria, and his mother Queen,* and many reigning Princes of Germany and Italy, bent before the cross. Silence the most profound reigned, while those whom all were bound to worship upon earth, knelt before the throne of Heaven. This striking scene has been so beautifully described by Madame de Stael, that I will not attempt to give you any account of it. She justly observes, that as soon as the act of adoration is finished, St. Peter's resembles an immense café, in which the people perambulate, apparently thinking of anything but religion. The effect of the fiery cross is much diminished by the distracting lights in a little raised gallery

* Created Archduchess of the once happy Republic of Lucca.

on one side of the dome, in which the exposition of the relics is made. These chiefly consist, I think, of a piece of the true cross on which Christ was crucified, incased in gold; a bit of the spear which pierced the side; a morsel of the sponge; and the *volto santo*, as the Italians call it, or 'the true image' of the face of our Saviour on Santa Veronica's handkerchief, whose statue, flourishing a marble pocket handkerchief, stands immediately below. Each of these precious relics were brought out successively by a priest, who carried it in his hands, and, followed by two others who carried nothing, walked continually to and fro in the little gallery—much as I have seen a lion exercise himself in his den. Then stopping full in face of the people, he presented it to their view, and at last went out with it at a door which opened upon the gallery, from behind the scenes, and returned with another.

Leaving St. Peter's we drove to S. Antonio de' Portoghesi, to see the sepulchre of Christ. The open portal of this small but beautiful church poured forth one flood of light. The walls, columns, shrines, and lateral chapels, which are entirely formed of the most beautiful polished marbles, reflected like a mirror the blaze of the innumerable tapers with which it was illuminated. The sepulchre, which was in the great altar, was overpoweringly resplendent. The church, though crowded with people, was as silent as the grave; not a whisper—not a footstep was to be heard. All, except ourselves, were prostrate on the ground in silent prayer; and, with light footsteps, we left it as soon and as silently as we could

This evening we attended a grand Accademia of sacred music, in the house of an Italian lady. Voices, which almost seemed more than human, sang, in the alternation of recitative, solo, duet, trio, and grand chorus, a succession of the most original, the most solemn, the most astonishing compositions that mortal genius surely ever framed, or mortal ear ever heard. It was music which resembled, in its wonderful pathos and power over the soul, nothing that I could have conceived this world to have produced. Never shall I forget the divine Miserere with which it concluded. It surpassed that which we heard at the Sistine Chapel, not only in the

superiority of the composition, but in having full and extremely fine accompaniments; whereas, at the latter, the music is invariably purely vocal. Out of Rome no such music is to be heard; but it is in sacred music, and especially in this branch of it, that the Romans excel, or rather they possess it exclusively.

LETTER LXXIV.

GOOD FRIDAY—THE TRE ORE—THE PILGRIMS.

ON the morning of Good Friday, we resumed our wearisome labours by going to the Sistine Chapel. About ten o'clock the Pope appeared; and after a long service, the crucifix over the altar, which had been covered up all the week with a violet or purple-coloured cloth, (the mourning of crosses and cardinals here), was uncovered. This is called the Discovery of the Cross; and then, after a great deal of fuss and mummery, it is laid on a napkin on a stand before the altar, and after some chanting, and much loss of time, the Pope comes to it, kneels to it, prays, or seems to pray, over it, and goes away, and all the Cardinals come one by one, and do the same. And this is called the Adoration of the Cross. Then they all set off upon the usual procession to the Paolina Chapel; the only difference being, that the Pope walks without any canopy over him, and uncovered. The doors of the Paolina Chapel were closed upon them, and what they did there I don't know; only I understand their business was to take up the Host which they had deposited in the sepulchre yesterday. Certain it is, they came back just as they went, except that the Pope wore his mitre. As soon as this was over, without waiting for the long mass which was to follow, I went to the service of the *Tre Ore*, 'the three hours of agony' of Christ upon the cross, which lasts from twelve to three.

It is a complete drama, and is performed in several churches. I attended it in S. Andrea delle Fratte, which, before I arrived, was crowded almost to suffocation; but a chair, in a commodious situation, and a soldier to guard it, had been kept for me by the attention of the priests, who had been apprised of my coming.

The upper part of the church was arranged like a theatre, with painted trees, and pasteboard rocks and thickets, representing Mount Calvary. A little way down, two Roman centurions, large as life, dressed in military uniforms, and mounted on pasteboard horses, were flourishing their pasteboard swords. Higher up on the mount, on three crucifixes, were nailed the figures of Christ and the two thieves; so correctly imitating life, or rather death, that I took it for wax-work.

The Roman Catholics say that Christ spoke seven times upon the cross,* and that at every saying a dagger entered the heart of the Virgin, who is therefore painted with seven daggers sticking in her breast, and adored as 'Nostra Signora de' sette dolori'—Our Lady of the seven sorrows.

The service of the *Tre Ore*, is, therefore, divided into seven acts, between each of which there is a hymn. In every act, one of the seven set dissertations, upon the *sette parole* of Christ, is read—or begun to be read—by a priest, who goes on until his lecture is interrupted by the preacher, who breaks in upon it at whatever part he pleases with a sermon (as they call it) or rather a tirade, of his own, which seems to be extempore, but I am told is previously learnt by rote.

A fat Dominican filled the pulpit on this occasion. He opened his seven sermons by a preparatory exhortation, inviting us to come to listen to the last accents of Christ, to witness his dying agonies, &c.—in these words:

"*Venite ad ascoltar gli ultimi accenti di Gesù. Quanto sia giusta cosa e dovuta, che i Christiani accompagnino il lor' Redentore in queste ore tenerissme dell' agonia,*" &c.

Then he said it was our ingratitude which caused him these tremendous agonies.

* The seven sayings of Christ are as follows:—

1st.—"Father! forgive them, for they know not what they do!"

2nd.—(To the good thief.) "To-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise."

3rd.—(To the Virgin Mary,) } "Woman! behold thy son!
(and to the Apostle John,) } "Son! behold thy mother!"

4th.—"My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me!"

5th.—"I thirst."

6th.—"It is finished!" (*Consummatum est!*)

7th.—"Father! into thy hands I commend my spirit!"

"*Guardatelo bene, O Anime!* (a term of great abuse) *e la vostra ingratitudine che gli cagiona quelle tremende agonie di morte. Guardelo bene su quella croce; tutto da capo a piedi fatto una piaga, le spalle e tutto il corpo lacerati dai flagelli, il petto snervato dalle percosse, il capo trapassato orribilmente dalle spine, i capelli strappati, la barba schintata, il volto ferito dalle guanciate, le vene vuote di sangue, la bocca inaridata dalla sete, la lingua amareggiata dal fiele e dall' aceto, le mani e piedi trivellati e trafitti da fieri chiodi, e questi squarci inaspriti anche più dal peso del suo medesimo corpo,*"* &c. &c. &c.

Then he burst forth into a string of apostrophes to Christ on the cross, being an incessant repetition of interjections and vocatives, interlarded with a few metaphors, most of which I hold to be perfectly untranslateable. The following, which I took down verbatim from his mouth, were uttered without the smallest interruption or pause:—"*O mio Gesù! O Gesù amorosissimo! O Fratello Gesù! Fratello amorosissimo! O Gesù del mio cuore! O amaratissimo mio Gesù! O Gesù affiitto! O Gesù coronato da spine! O Gesù caro! O Gesù mio! O Gesù dolcissimo! O Gesù dolorosissimo! O Gesù benignissimo! O amantissimo nostro Gesù! il cui incendio amoroso non poterono estinguere le acque di tanti crudeltà e tribulazione!*" That is to say, "O my Jesus! O most beloved Jesus! O brother Jesus! Most beloved brother! O Jesus of my heart! O most suffering Jesus! O Jesus afflicted! O Jesus crowned with thorns! O dear Jesus! O my Jesus! O most sweet Jesus! O most sorrowful Jesus! O most benign Jesus! O our most beloved Jesus! whose burning love the waters of so much cruelty and tribulation could not extinguish!"

Then he reviled us all, under every sort of vituperative epithet, in which *Mundani! Anime! Peccatori insensibili!*

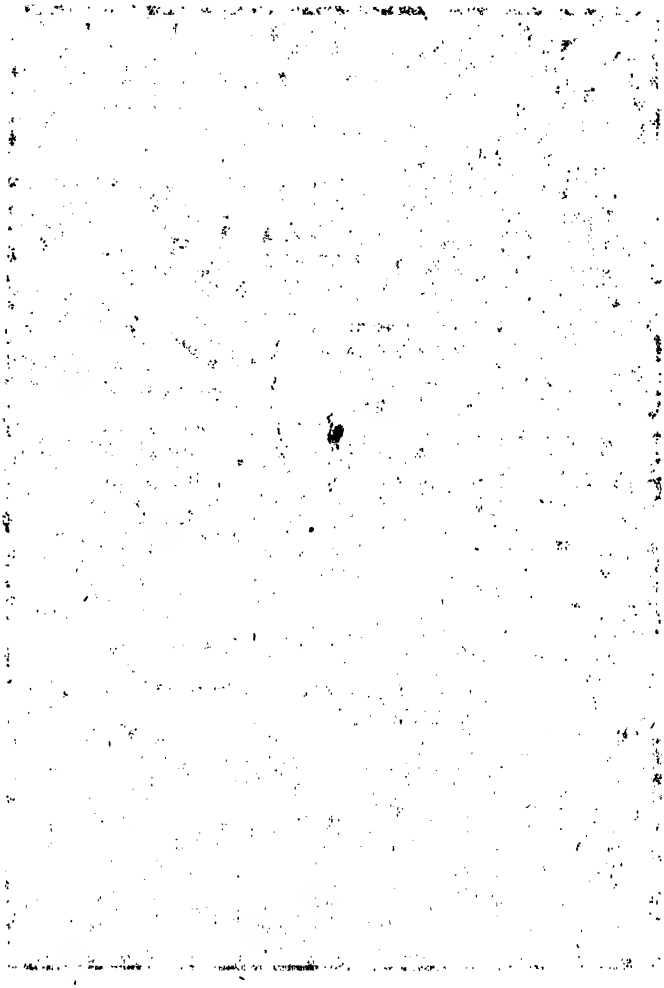
* "Look at him upon that cross—from head to foot one entire wound—his shoulders, and all his body lacerated with scourges, his breast bruised with blows, his head torn cruelly with thorns, his hair pulled away by the roots, his beard savagely plucked out, his face battered with blows, his veins devoid of blood, his mouth dried up with thirst, his tongue embittered with gall and vinegar, his feet and hands wrenched round and transfixed with strong nails, and the torture of his broken legs aggravated by the weight of his body," &c. &c.

preacher called them,—who deposited it on the front of the stage, where all the people thronged to kiss the toe through the veil, and weep over it. I was conducted round to it, along with some Italian ladies of my acquaintance, through a private passage, by one of the civil priests, and so escaped the crowd. Upon close inspection, I found that the body was made of pasteboard, extremely well painted for effect; it had real hair on the head, and it was so well executed, that even when closely viewed, it was marked with the agony of nature, and seemed to have recently expired.

The congregation consisted of all ranks, from the prince to the beggar, but there was a preponderance of the higher classes. Some ladies of the first rank in Rome were beside me, and they were in agitation the most excessive.

You may depend upon the accuracy of the quotations I have given you from the good friar's harangues; and they may enable you to form some idea of the strain of pulpit oratory here. I took them down from the preacher's mouth, while apparently I was occupied with my prayer-book, and I believe my employment was undiscovered, except by the soldier at my back.

After the last Miserere of the week at the Sistine Chapel this evening, which I thought scarcely equal to that of yesterday, we stopped in St. Peter's only to give a last glance to the cross of fire; and without waiting for its second adoration by the Pope and Cardinals, we drove to the Hospital of the *Trinità de Pellegrini*, where poor pilgrims of all nations are gratuitously lodged and fed for three days, during the Holy Week. This immense building has sufficient accommodation for five thousand pilgrims, and is frequently full. On the evening of Holy Thursday and Good Friday, many of the Cardinals, and Roman nobility of both sexes, may be seen here, washing the pilgrims' feet, and afterwards waiting upon them at supper like servants. In the female apartments above stairs, we saw some of the loveliest of the Roman *principesse* on their knees, washing, with their own fair hands, the dirty feet of the female pilgrims—while the old Cardinals below were performing the same menial offices to the men. They do not, like the Pope, merely go through the form of it, but really and truly wash



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ENERGETIC PREACHING.

their dirty feet—as we can testify;—for although females are not allowed to enter the wards of the male pilgrims, yet being curious to see how the old Cardinals looked, we obtained permission to peep in, and found them scrubbing away in good earnest, cleansing, I suppose, at once, the pilgrims' feet, and their own souls. It was easy to see how proud they were of this act of humility.

A friend of ours this evening attended a pious exercise of a different sort, at a small church or oratorio, the name of which I have forgotten, but belonging, I think, to the PP. Caravita. Almost all present were clad as penitents, their whole figures—even their heads and faces,—completely covered with coarse dark cloth, and holes cut for their eyes. The doors of the church were shut, and after a suitable exhortation from a friar, scourges were distributed, the lights were extinguished, and in total darkness the flagellation began, which continued for twenty minutes,—while a dismal sort of chanted music, like the wailings of suffering souls, was sung. The candles were then relighted, and all departed in peace.

The shops of all the *pizzicaruoli*,—the cheesemongers, sausage-dealers, &c.—are to-night most brilliantly illuminated. It is the general custom they say, but I cannot learn the reason.

LETTER LXXV.

SATURDAY—BAPTISM OF THE JEWS—AN ORDINATION—THE RESURRECTION—BLESSING THE HOUSES—CONFESSION AND COMMUNION.

WE were silly enough to get up this morning before six o'clock, to see some Jews baptized at St. John's Lateran. A couple of these unfortunate Israelites, and sometimes more, are always procured on this day, every year, for this purpose. Turks are preferred when they are to be had, but they are rare. The Jews, I understand, are at present very dear; no less weighty arguments than eighty Roman crowns each, I heard, were necessary to convince these new proselytes of the truth of Christianity. Besides these golden reasons, I am assured that no sooner does a Jew see the error of his ways than his debts towards his brother Jews are cancelled; so that, as soon as he becomes a Christian, he is at liberty to be a rogue; and if the wife of a converted Jew refuses to embrace Christianity, he is held to be divorced from her, and may marry another. Considering this, it really says a great deal for them, that there are so few converts. It is even hinted, that there are fewer converts than baptisms; and that the baptismal rite is sometimes performed upon the same neophytes.

The two devoted Israelites prepared for this occasion, attired in dirty yellow silk gowns, were seated on a bench within the marble font of the Baptistry, which resembles a large bath, both in form and shape, and, in fact, was used as such in primitive times, when baptism was performed by complete submersion. The font itself was empty, but the ancient vase at the bottom of it, in which, according to an absurd legend, Constantine was healed of his leprosy by St. Sylvester, stood before them filled with water, and its

margin adorned with flowers. The unhappy Israelites, with most rueful countenances, were conning their prayers out of a book, while, close to their sides, stuck their destined godfathers,—two black-robed Doctors of divinity,—as if to guard and secure their spiritual captives.

The Cardinal Bishop, who had been employed ever since six o'clock in the benediction of fire, water, oil, wax, and flowers, now appeared, followed by a long procession of priests and crucifixes. He descended into the font, repeated a great many prayers in Latin over the water, occasionally dipping his hand into it. Then a huge flaming wax taper, about six feet high, and of proportionate thickness, painted with images of the Virgin and Christ, which had previously been blessed, was set upright in the vase; more Latin prayers were mumbled, one of the Jews was brought, the Bishop cut the sign of the cross in the hair at the crown of his head, then, with a silver ladle, poured some of the water upon the part, baptizing him in the usual forms, both the godfathers and he having agreed to all that was required of them. The second Jew was brought, upon whom the same ceremonies were performed; this poor little fellow wore a wig, and when the cold water was poured on his bare skull, he winced exceedingly, and made many wry faces. They were then conveyed to the altar of the neighbouring chapel, where they were confirmed, and repeated the Creed. The Bishop then made the sign of the cross upon their foreheads with holy oil, over which white fillets were immediately tied to secure it. Then the Bishop addressed a long exhortation to them, in the course of which he told them, that having now abjured their 'ridicola superstizione,' and embraced the true faith, unless they continued in their hearts good Christians without wavering, they would bring upon themselves greater damnation, and be thrown into the lowest pit of hell-fire; nay, if they ever entertained a single Jewish thought, or felt the least hankering after their abominable idolatries, (there, I think, the Jews might have retorted the charge,) nothing could save them from this doom. He frightened them so, that the little Jew with a wig began to cry most bitterly, and could not be comforted. This being over, the Jews were con-

ducted with great ceremony from the Baptistry to the door of the church, where they stopped, and it was not till after much chanting by the Bishop that it seemed settled they should pass the threshold. Accordingly this was effected, and they were seated within the very pale of the altar, where they had to witness such a tedious succession of foolish ceremonies, that I marvel much they did not repent them of their conversion. It was an ordination of priests of all kinds and degrees, which lasted nearly five hours; and though we had nothing to do with it, deluded by the fallacious promise of some fine music, which never came, we were foolish enough to stay till the end. The Bishop, disrobed, and in his linen tunic, his golden mitre exchanged for one set with precious stones, threw himself prostrate on the steps of the altar, with his face and arms extended on the ground, and all the priests who were to be ordained fell flat on the floor behind him in the same posture. In about a minute the Bishop got up, said a few unintelligible words, and threw himself down again. Then up they all got, and after much fidgetting up and down, and moving about, and chanting in their usual drawl, the Bishop took a pair of scissors, invested several little boys with the tonsure, by cutting a round piece of hair out of the crowns of their heads, and then, after much ado, he put the little white shirts over their heads, and made priestlings of them. Poor little things, some of them did not seem to be more than ten years old. I was glad to hear they might, after this, leave the priesthood if they chose it. Then a batch of deacons (irrevocable priests) were ordained; but these cannot yet perform high mass, nor give extreme unction nor absolution, nor perform any of those higher functions of the church. It was a terrible time before their dressing was completed. Then a number of deacons were created priests, and their fore-finger and thumb were anointed with holy oil, that they might elevate the Host; and between every time of using this holy oil, the Bishop always rubbed his hands with lemon. But mortal patience would fail under the recital of the endless little wearisome ceremonies that were gone through—the dressings and undressings, the pulling off and the putting on of mitres and robes, the

gettings up and sittings down, the bowings and scrapings, the hair-cuttings, the anointings, the chantings, and the mummery of all kinds, that filled up these five mis-spent hours.

At twelve o'clock we left the church along with the Cardinal Bishop, who ended the ordination by carrying out the cup, followed by all the new-made priests and priestlings. At the same moment the resurrection was announced by much 'tintinnabular uproar,' as a witty friend of ours called it; and certainly the larum was astounding. The bells of every church in Rome, (and there are upwards of three hundred,) began to jingle at once, the cannon from the Castle of St. Angelo to fire, and at the Church of Santa Maria Egyzziaca, the blowing of horns and trumpets, the clang of kettle-drums, and every species of tumult, proclaimed the sacred event to the world.

During the days in which the bells are tied up—from Holy Thursday to Saturday at noon,—the hours on which they are usually rung for prayers, viz., six in the morning, three in the afternoon, and the Ave Maria, which is immediately after sunset, are announced by a little wooden machine, called *tric-trac*, making a sound similar to its name, but very noisy, with which some of the inferior clergy run about the churches at the proper times. Though the resurrection takes place on Saturday at noon, the fast is not over till midnight, at which time most good Catholics eat *grasso*,—that is, an enormous supper of fish, flesh, and fowl. A total abstinence from food during the two previous days is still practised by many, but the feasting is now more universal than the fasting.

The priests are very actively employed at Easter in running in and out of every house, blessing it with holy water. I could not think what one of them was about whom I encountered on the stairs, dabbling away with a little brush; when explained, I found the rest of the house had been sprinkled, but that the Conte, our noble landlord, had not ventured to introduce the holy water into our *appartamento*, thinking such an ablution would not be at all to our heretical taste; but I begged the good father to return and besprinkle our rooms to his full satisfaction, assuring him

I should be sorry to deprive them of such an advantage, at which, and the sight of a piece of money, he laughed most heartily.

Every Italian must at this time confess, and receive the communion; it is compulsory. A friend of ours, who has lived a great deal in foreign countries, and there imbibed very heterodox notions, and who has never to us made any secret of his confirmed unbelief of Roman-catholic doctrines, went to-day to confession with the strongest repugnance.

"What can I do?" he said. "If I neglect it, I am reprimanded by the parish priest; if I delay it, my name is posted up in the parish church; if I persist in my contumacy, the arm of the church will overtake me, and my rank and fortune only serve to make me more obnoxious to its power. If I chose to make myself a martyr to infidelity, as the saints of old did to religion, and to suffer the extremity of punishment in the loss of property and personal rights, what is to become of my wife and family? The same ruin would overtake them, though they are Roman Catholics; for I am obliged not only to conceal my true belief, and profess what I depise, but I must bring up my children in their abominable idolatries and superstition; or, if I teach them the truth, make them either hypocrites or beggars." I shall not enter into the soundness of my friend's arguments, or defend the rectitude of his conduct, but certainly the alternative is a hard one; and I believe there are thousands whose virtue would not be proof against it; for this reason, he would not live a day in Italy if he could live out of it, which is not in his power.

LETTER LXXVI.

EASTER SUNDAY—THE BENEDICTION.

THE grandest Roman-catholic festival of the year is Easter Sunday, which was doubly welcome to us, because the last of the holy shows of this exhausting season. On this day the church puts forth all her pomp and splendour. The Pope assists at high mass, or, as the priests have it,—*il sommo Pontefice canta Messa solennemente in S. Pietro*—and there is a procession, which, as it is seen to the highest advantage in that noble church, is as grand as any such procession can be. A pen was erected for us ladies in the left of the high altar, for wherever the Pope comes we are always cooped up, for fear of accidents. Luckily, however, it was unprovided with a grate, so that we could see to perfection. It was, in all respects, a happy liberation from the gloomy imprisonment we had been sustaining day after day, in the Sistine Chapel. The sable robes of the past week were universally thrown aside, and the gayer—the more catholically orthodox—were we.

The church was lined with the Guarda Nobile in their splendid uniforms of gold and scarlet, and nodding plumes of white ostrich feathers; and the Swiss guards, with their polished cuirasses and steel helmets. The great centre aisle was kept clear by a double wall of armed men, for the grand procession, the approach of which, after much expectation, was proclaimed by the sound of a trumpet from the farther end of the church. A long band of priests advanced, loaded with still augmenting magnificence, as they ascended to the higher orders. Cloth-of-gold, and embroidery of gold and silver, and crimson velvet, and mantles of spotted ermine, and flowing trains, and attendant train-bearers, and mitres and crucifixes glittering with jewels, and priests and patri-

archs, and bishops and cardinals, dazzled our astonished eyes, and filled the long length of St. Peter's. Lastly, came the Pope, in his crimson chair of state (*sedia gestatoria*), borne on the shoulders of twenty *palfrenieri*. He was arrayed in robes of white, and wore the tiara, or triple crown of the conjoined Trinity, with a canopy of cloth of silver floating over his head, and was preceded by two men carrying enormous fans composed of large plumes of ostrich feathers, mounted on long gilded wands. He stopped to pay his adorations to the miraculous Madonna in her chapel, about half-way up; and this duty, which he never omits, being performed, he was slowly borne past the high altar, liberally giving his benediction with the twirl of the three fingers as he passed.

They set him down upon a magnificent stool, in front of the altar, on which he knelt, and his crown being taken off, and the cardinals taking off their little red skull-caps, and all kneeling in a row, he was supposed to pray. Having remained a few minutes in this attitude, they took him to the chair prepared for him on the right of the throne. There he read, or seemed to read, something out of a book, for I know, from having seen him read in private, that it was impossible, without his spectacles he could really make it out; and then he was again taken to the altar, on which his tiara was placed; and, bare-headed, he repeated—or, as by courtesy, they call it, sang—a small part of the service, threw up clouds of incense, and was removed to the crimson canopied throne; and high mass was celebrated by a Cardinal and two Bishops, at which he assisted, that is, he got up and sat down in particular parts.

During the whole service I could not help observing, that the only part of the congregation who were in the least attentive, were the small body of English, whom curiosity, and perhaps sense of decorum, rendered so. All the Italians seemed to consider it quite as much of a pageant as ourselves, but neither a new nor an interesting one; and they were walking about, and talking, and interchanging pinches of snuff with each other, exactly as if it had been a place of amusement,—till the tinkling of a little bell, which announced the elevation of the Host, changed the scene. Every knee was now bent to the earth, every voice was

hushed, the reversed arms of the military rang with an instantaneous clang on the marble pavement as they sunk on the ground, and all was still as death. This did not last above two minutes. The Host was swallowed, and so began and ended the only thing that bore even the smallest outward aspect of religion.

They brought the Pope, however, again to the footstool to pray. Two Cardinals always support him, some priestly attendants bear up his train, and others busy themselves about his drapery, while two or three others put on and off his tiara and mitre; and so conduct him to and fro, between the altar and throne, where he sits at the top of this magnificent temple, exactly like an idol dressed up to be worshipped. The long silver robes, the pale, dead, inanimate countenance, and helpless appearance of the good old man, tend still more to give him the air of a thing without any will of its own, but which is carried about, and set in motion, and managed by the priests, and taught by them to make certain movements.

At last they put him again into the chair of state, set the crown upon his head, and, preceded by the great ostrich-feather fans, he was borne out of the church.

We made all possible expedition up to the Loggia,—a temporary sort of gallery erected on the top of the colonnade, opposite to that occupied by the royal families,—and secured places in the front row. An expecting crowd had long covered the broad expanded steps and platform of the church, and spread itself over the piazza.

The military now poured out of St. Peter's, and formed an immense ring before its spacious front, behind which the horse-guards were drawn up, and an immense number of carriages, filled with splendidly-dressed women, and thousands of people on foot were assembled. But the multitude almost shrank into insignificance in the vast area of the piazza; and neither piety, curiosity, nor even that all-universal gregarious passion that makes people crowd to a crowd, had collected together sufficient numbers to fill it.

The tops of the colonnades all round were, however, thronged with spectators; and it was a curious sight to see

such a mixture of all ranks and nations,—from the coroneted head of kings, to the poor cripple who crawled along the pavement,—assembled together to await the blessing of an old man, their fellow-mortal, now tottering on the brink of the grave.

Not the least picturesque figures among the throng, were the *contadini*, who, in every variety of curious costume, had flocked in from their distant mountain villages, to receive the blessing of the Holy Father, and whose bright and eager countenances, shaded by their long dark hair, were turned to the balcony where the Pope was to appear. At length the two white ostrich-feather fans, the forerunners of his approach, were seen; and he was borne forward on his throne, above the shoulders of the Cardinals and Bishops, who filled the balcony. After an audible prayer he arose, and elevating his hands to heaven, invoked a solemn benediction upon the assembled multitude, and the people committed to his charge. Every head was uncovered, the soldiers, and *many* of the spectators, sunk on their knees on the pavement to receive the blessing. That blessing was given with impressive solemnity, but with little of gesture or parade. Immediately the thundering of cannon from the Castle of St. Angelo, and the peal of bells from St. Peter's, proclaimed the joyful tidings to the skies. The Pope was borne out, and the people rose from their knees. But at least one half of them had never knelt at all, which greatly diminished the impressive effect of the whole. There is something in the simultaneous expression of one universal feeling among a multitude, especially if that feeling partake of rejoicing, enthusiasm, devotion, or any generous passion, that is affecting and sublime in the highest degree; but if it be only partially diffused, its effect is utterly lost. I forgot to say, that, after the benediction, several papers were thrown down by one of the Cardinals, which contained, I understand, the indulgences granted to the different churches, and a most pious scuffle ensued among the people to catch them.

The Pope's benediction this day, the Italians say, extends all over the world, but on Thursday it only goes to the gates of Rome.

On Thursday, too, previous to the benediction, one of the Cardinals curses all Jews, Turks, and heretics, 'by bell, book, and candle.' The little bell is rung, the curse is sung from the book, and the lighted taper thrown down amongst the people. The Pope's benediction immediately follows upon all true believers.

LETTER LXXVII.

Illumination of St. Peter's, and Fireworks from the Castle San Angelo.

We have just witnessed one of the most brilliant spectacles in the world—the illumination of St. Peter's; and the girandola, or fireworks, from the Castle San Angelo. In general they are only given at the anniversary of the Festival of St. Peter, which falls in the middle of summer, when Rome is deserted by every stranger, and by all the inhabitants who can escape; but this year, the old custom of exhibiting them on the evening of Easter Sunday, has been revived, in compliment to the Prince Royal of Bavaria,* who has been here several months; and it is only one of the many pleasures his residence at Rome has yielded so those who have enjoyed the advantage of his acquaintance.

At Ave-Maria we drove to the Piazza of St. Peter's. The lighting of the *lanternoni*, or large paper lanterns, each of which looks like a globe of ethereal fire, had been going on for an hour, and by the time we arrived there was nearly completed. As we passed the Ponte San Angelo, the appearance of this immense magnificent church, glowing in its own brightness—the millions of lights reflected in the calm waters of the Tiber, and mingling with the last golden glow of evening, so as to make the whole building seem covered with burnished gold, had a most striking and magical effect.

Our progress was slow, being much impeded by the long line of carriages before us; but at length we arrived at the piazza of St. Peter's, and took our station on the right of its farther extreminity, so as to lose the deformity of the dark dingy Vatican Palace. The gathering shades of night rendered the illumination every moment more brilliant. The

* Now King.

whole of this immense church—its columns, capitals, cornices, and pediments—the beautiful swell of the lofty dome, towering into heaven, the ribs converging into one point at top, surmounted by the lantern of the church, and crowned by the cross,—all were designed in lines of fire; and the vast sweep of the circling colonnades, in every rib, line, mould, cornice, and column, were resplendent with the same beautiful light.

While we were gazing upon it, a bell chimed. On the cross of fire at the top, waved a brilliant light, as if wielded by some celestial hand, and instantly ten thousand globes and stars of vivid fire seemed to roll spontaneously along the building, as if by magic; and self-kindled, it blazed in a moment into one dazzling flood of glory. Fancy herself, in her most sportive mood, could scarcely have conceived so wonderful a spectacle as the instantaneous illumination of this magnificent fabric. The agents by whom it was effected were unseen, and it seemed the work of enchantment.

In the first instance, the illuminations had appeared to be complete, and one could not dream that thousands and tens of thousands of lamps were still to be illumined. Their vivid blaze harmonized beautifully with the softer milder light of the *lanternoni*. The brilliant glow of the whole illumination shed a rosy light upon the fountains, whose silver fall, and ever-playing showers, accorded well with the magic of the scene.

Viewed from the Trinità de' Monti, its effect was unspeakably beautiful. It seemed to be an enchanted palace hung in air, and called up by the wand of some invisible spirit. We did not, however, drive to the Trinità de' Monti, till after the exhibition of the girandola, or great fireworks from the Castle of St. Angelo, which commenced by a tremendous explosion, that represented the raging eruption of a volcano. Red sheets of fire seemed to blaze upwards into the glowing heavens, and then to pour down their liquid streams upon the earth. This was followed by an incessant and complicated display of every varied device that imagination could figure, one changing into another, and the beauty of the first effaced by that of the last. Hundreds of immense wheels turned round with a velocity that almost seemed as if demons

were whirling them, letting fall thousands of hissing dragons and scorpions and fiery snakes, whose long convolutions darting forward as far as the eye could reach in every direction, at length vanished into air. Fountains and jets of fire threw up their blazing cascades into the skies. The whole vault of heaven shone with the vivid fires, and seemed to receive into itself innumerable stars and suns, which, shooting up into it in brightness almost insufferable, vanished—like earth-born hopes.

The reflection in the depth of the calm clear waters of the Tiber was scarcely less beautiful than the spectacle itself; and the whole ended in a tremendous burst of fire, that, while it lasted, almost seemed to threaten conflagration to the world.

But this great agent of destruction was here wholly innocuous. Man, who walks the earth, ruling not only the whole order of beings, but the very elements themselves, has turned that seemingly uncontrollable power, which might annihilate the very globe itself, into a plaything for his amusement, and compelled it to assume every whimsical and fantastic form that his fancy dictates. It alone, of all things in existence—reversing the order of nature,—rises from earth towards the skies; yet even this he has bowed to his will. Wonderful as these fireworks were,—and let not that name lead you to imagine they bore any resemblance to those puny exhibitions of squibs and crackers which we denominate fireworks in England, for nothing could be more different,—wonderful as they were, the illumination of St. Peter's far surpassed them. It is a spectacle which, unlike other mere sights that are seen and forgotten, leaves an indelible impression on the mind.

The expense of the illumination of St. Peter's, and of the girandola, when repeated two successive evenings, as they invariably are at the festival of St. Peter, is 1000 crowns; when exhibited only one night, they cost 700. Eighty men were employed in the instantaneous illumination of the lamps, which to us seemed the work of enchantment. They were so posted as to be unseen.

I have now been in Rome during a second Holy Week, and have enjoyed the immunity I dearly earned last year from all its show and fatigues.

The three Misereres in the Sistine Chapel—the exhibition of the cross of fire in St. Peter's, and the Pope's benediction from the balcony of the church, are all that I have attended, and all that I should attend, if I were to live fifty years in Rome. The procession into St. Peter's, and the high mass either on Easter Sunday, or on Christmas-day—for they are exactly the same—are, however, very well worth seeing once, but once will suffice.

Excepting this, none of the ceremonies at Christmas in the Church of Rome are worth seeing at all, and indeed there are very few to see. On Christmas-eve, a mass is said in the Sistine Chapel, if the Pope be at the Vatican Palace; or at the Quirinal Chapel, if he be at the Quirinal Palace, which lasts till midnight. But there are no ceremonies whatever to see—no music whatever to hear; the Pope himself never attends it, and the Cardinals who do, like the rest of the congregation, are more than half asleep.

Yet most strangers go to it, and all repent of so doing. From thence they generally proceed to some church where there is music, which is rarely worth hearing; and at four in the morning they adjourn to Santa Maria Maggiore, where the grand vigil of Christmas-eve is held; and after sitting out a most wearisome mass, they are at last rewarded with the sight of the new-born Christ, carried about dressed in magnificent swaddling-clothes, for the devotion and delight of the people.

I once went through this ceremony in a Portuguese cathedral, and never repented any other act of folly so much; indeed, it is wholly without an object, for the same doll which represents the infant Saviour of the world, may be seen at any hour you please, either before or after the time of its birth, and I cannot understand the advantage of looking at it just when one should be in bed.

This vigil of Christmas-eve was formerly really held on the eve; it began before midnight, and lasted till three or four in the morning; but such scenes of indecorous gaiety and intrigue went on, on this occasion, in the church itself, that the hours were altered.

LETTER LXXVIII.

Convents—Taking the Veil.

The re-institution of the Inquisition, of the Jesuits, and of Monastic orders in the nineteenth century, is a retrograde step in the progress of society.

The French suppressed all convents of men, without exception. They seized upon their revenues, took possession of their ancient habitations, invested as many of their tonsured heads with the military cap and feather as could be made to submit to them, and shipped off those who refused to renounce their vows, to imprisonment in Corsica and Sardinia. That the poor and the old, who had passed their lives within the peaceful cloister, and given to their convent the little stipend that was to secure support to their latter years, must have suffered severely when thus deprived of all, there can be no doubt. But these excepted, I own that for the whole race of monks and friars, "black, white, and grey, with all their trumpery," I feel little compassion. In the same summary manner, all the nunneries in Rome, excepting two, were suppressed; but, however wise might have been their gradual abolition, the propriety of turning out at once so many secluded, and, in many cases, destitute and harmless females, may be doubted. Of the consequence of this step, judging of them, as I must do, from hearsay only, I will not venture to speak. But since they had been suppressed, and all those evil consequences once incurred, I cannot but lament that they should have been again restored —especially in such numbers; and, above all, that convents of men, which I look upon to be nests of vice, hypocrisy, ignorance, and abomination, and which, for the most part, are filled with young sturdy beggars, should have been reestablished at all. The exact number of convents, and still

more of their inmates, it is difficult to ascertain; but all allow that the friars considerably out-number the nuns. With the assistance of one or two *abati*, I counted upwards of fifty convents for men, and five-and-thirty for women, in Rome and the immediate vicinity, and probably we left many unreckoned.

I have visited many of the nunneries, and one or two of the convents in Rome; for a *convento* always means here a monastic community of men, and a *monasterio*, of women; —although the reverse is the case in general parlance in England;—but as the interior of one much resembles another, and as there is nothing particularly interesting about any of them, I shall only give you a short account of my visit to that of S. Sylvestro *in Capite*, originally founded for the noble sisters of the house of Colonna, who dedicated themselves to God.* None but the daughters of noble families are admitted here; and yet in this living grave, where rank, riches, youth, beauty, and genius, are all buried in equal nothingness, and where nearly all but the mere animal powers are extinguished—what can it signify with what titles they were once adorned?

The Convent of S. Sylvestro stands in the Campo Marzo, in one of the best situations of modern Rome. It is an immense building, three stories high, in the form of a quadrangle, enclosing a small garden in the centre, which, from being so enclosed, is neither blessed with much light nor air. Here, however, alone the nuns can enjoy "these common gifts of Heaven;" for, unlike the monks and friars, who may roam about the town and country, they may never cross the threshold of their prison-house. Yet these nuns are of the Franciscan order, the mildest of all. They are allowed to see all their near relations at the grate, and even occasionally to receive the females in the parlour of the convent. They are not obliged to rise to nocturnal prayer, nor to practice fasts and penances of peculiar austerity. The privilege of speech is not denied them; nor is the use of linen forbidden, in order that the dirt of the body may serve for the purification of the soul.

* In the year 1318.—Vide Gibbon's Decline and Fall, vol. xii., chap. 70, p. 314.

About forty nuns, with about half the number of lay sisters, or servants, occupy this spacious monastery, which would contain more than a hundred; indeed, during the whole time the French were in Rome, it also received a community of expelled nuns of the Capuchin order, who voluntarily continued to practise all its austerities, though living with the Franciscans of San Sylvestro. None of either sisterhood left their order, though all, at that time, were at perfect liberty to do so.

The Superior, a fine-looking woman, conducted us through the convent, and seemed much gratified and amused with our visit. She is now near fifty, and had herself taken the vows at the age of twenty, not only voluntarily, but in opposition to the wishes of her parents, and assured us she had never repented it. When asked why she had chosen at that age to leave her family, and renounce the world, she replied, "Because God called me!"—(*Perchè Dio mi chiamò.*)

The convent contains nothing remarkable. There is a large, wild-looking, cold, cheerless hall, or refectory, in which they all assemble to dinner and supper, but no sitting-room. Their own apartments, in which they usually sit as well as sleep, are tolerably large, and decently clean, but have no fire-place, and consequently lose that important ventilation. This deficiency of a chimney, however, is common in all true Italian houses, and a brazier full of ignited charcoal is the usual and unwholesome substitute for the cheerful and salutary blaze of a fire.

Six or seven of the nuns were sitting at work together, in one of their bed-rooms; for they have nothing in the world to do, except to pray and make their clothes. They do, indeed, take in children to educate, though how they educate them is more than I can conceive; for though I was in every part of the convent I could neither see nor hear of any book, except their prayer-books. When I asked them if they had not a Bible, they were shocked at such a profane idea.

Luckily, as we thought, for the poor children, they had then only three pupils; but, in general, they have a considerable number. They showed us a little theatre in the convent, where their scholars, assisted by some of the nuns,

occasionally act sacred dramas during the Carnival, to a select audience of their female relatives.*

The nuns' apartments in every story open upon a gallery which runs round the quadrangle that forms their convent, and from the top of all they have a balcony, from which, oh, height of happiness! they can catch a distant glimpse of the Corso. They eagerly showed it to us, and this peep of the world they had left, seemed their highest enjoyment.

Their eager curiosity about us—our persons, names, situations, ages, reasons for coming to Italy, and to their convent—but, above all, about every article of our dress, its make, texture, fashion, and value, was quite insatiable; and the questions they asked perfectly unanswerable.

They have a large apothecary's shop in the convent, where medicines are compounded by two of the nuns, which must, I should think, be the death of many of them. The doctor, however, is the only man ever admitted into the convent, except the confessor and the Pope,—who once paid them a visit—an event never to be forgotten.

I ought, too, to have excepted the Cardinal Vicario, who has the charge of all the convents (I mean nunneries), and must have enough upon his hands, I should think.

We saw two *converti*, girls destined to be nuns, but who had not yet taken the noviciate veil. They were, however, called *sposine*, the affianced spouses of Christ. Both were young, and one was very pretty and lively. She was a Lucchese of a noble family, and had lived here two years,—and yet was resolved to be a nun, a thing which is to me quite incomprehensible. Two days, I should think, would cure any body. She was only waiting for her portion, which, in this convent, is unusually high, being 1500 crowns, beside a small annual stipend; the exact amount of which I have forgotten.

A novice, after taking the white veil, may leave the convent; and instances of it have occurred, but they are rare. Extreme ill health, an incurable disease, or the death of

* These sacred dramas would, however, be considered of rather a profane nature in our country. Our Saviour, the Virgin Mary, Mary Magdalen, the whole host of heaven—and even the Deity himself—are among the dramatis personæ.

brothers and sisters, which makes it necessary for *the victim* to be recalled to support the name or fortune of the family, are almost without exception, the reason of such events, when they do occur. Repentance, disinclination, however often they may happen, are concealed or avowed in vain. A woman who should persist in returning to the world, would be welcomed, not only with its dread laugh, but its severest reprehension. Her family would consider themselves dishonoured, and, in all probability, would refuse to receive her. Her friends and acquaintance would scarcely associate with her. No man would ever look upon her for his wife. She would be an object for the finger of scorn to point at. Under such circumstances she must take the vows or die.

It is only a few days since I saw a young lady, of noble family,—the Contessa M———, within these very walls, take those vows, which must therefore be considered irrevocable. She was young and handsome, and it was said that she entered the cloister by her own choice, uninfluenced by her parents. Still, it was a sufficiently melancholy sight, and I could not help thinking how often, in the long tedium of the living death to which she had doomed herself, she might look back to this moment with vain repentance,—not the less bitter because she could only blame herself: nor when I saw the crowds that filled the church—the pathway and altar strewed with flowers—the public applause—the gaze of strangers—the chorus of nuns—the blessings of Cardinals—the flattery of priests, and the tears of friends—could I help asking myself, if the secret vanity of being the heroine of such a scene, might not have had its influence in her determination?

By particular favour, we had been furnished with billets for the best seats, and after waiting about half an hour, two footmen, in rich liveries, made way for the young countess, who entered the crowded church in full dress, her dark hair blazing with diamonds. Supported by her mother, she advanced to the altar. The ceremony you must often have heard described, and I need not fatigue you with a minute repetition of its details. The officiating priest was the Cardinal Vicario, a fine-looking old man; the discourse from the

pulpit was pronounced by a Dominican monk, who addressed her as the affianced spouse of Christ,—a saint on earth;—one who had renounced the vanities of the world, for a foretaste of the joys of heaven. There was much of eulogium, and little of admonition—much rhapsody, and little sober reason or religion in it—very much that was calculated to inflame the inexperienced imagination, but little that could direct the erring judgment.

The sermon ended—the lovely victim herself, kneeling before the altar at the feet of the Cardinal, solemnly abjured that world whose pleasures and affections she seemed so well calculated to enjoy, and pronounced those irrevocable vows which severed her from them for ever.

As her voice, in soft recitative, chanted these fatal words, I believe there was scarcely an eye, in the whole of that vast church, unmoistened by tears.

The diamonds that sparkled in her dark hair were taken off; and her long and beautiful tresses fell luxuriantly down her shoulders. One lock of it was cut off by the Cardinal.

The grate that was to entomb her was opened. The Abbess and her black train of nuns appeared. Their choral voices chanted a strain of welcome. It said, or seemed to say,

"Sister spirit, come away!"

She renounced her name and title—adopted a new appellation—received the solemn benediction of the Cardinal, and the last embraces of her weeping friends—and passed that bourn through which she was never to return.

A pannel behind the high altar now opened, and she appeared at the grate again. Here she was despoiled of her splendid ornaments, her beautiful hair was mercilessly severed from her head by the fatal shears of the sisters, and holding up a temporary curtain, they hastened behind it, to take off her own rich dress, and invest her with the sober robes of the nun—the white coif and the noviciate veil. This veil, it may be necessary to explain, is a piece of cloth fixed on the top or back part of the head, and falling down behind, or on each side, in the same manner as on a veiled statue. It is not intended to conceal the face, nor can it answer that purpose; so that all you read in foolish romances about blush-

ing nuns or novices pulling down their veils, to save them from the gaze of some admiring youth, is sheer nonsense. Indeed, they are in no danger of being incommoded with it, as they can never more be seen by man. Their ordinary devotions are practised in a private chapel within the convent, and when they attend mass, they sit high up in a lofty church, completely screened from view by a gilded grating, so close, that it is impervious to the external gaze, though the nuns can see through it.

The dress of the Franciscan order, and, indeed, of every other I have ever seen, is plain and coarse, and far from beautiful. The gown is a black stuff, but made so awkwardly, that it is a complete disguise to the figure. The graces of the Venus de' Medicis herself, if she were attired in such habiliments, would be lost. But the quantity of white linen that surrounded the head and face, was rather becoming to the bright eyes and lovely countenance of the young novice, and when the curtain was removed, we all agreed that she looked prettier than before.

Throughout the whole ceremony she showed great calmness and firmness, and it was not till all was over that her eyes were moistened with the tears of natural emotion. She afterwards appeared at the little postern-gate of the convent, to receive the sympathy, and praise, and congratulations of all her friends and acquaintance; nay, even of strangers, all of whom are expected to pay their compliments to the new spouse of heaven.

The history of one of the former nuns of this convent, as related to me by one of the sisters, is quite a romance, and in its most common-place style. Her name was Sasso Ferrato; she was left an orphan and an heiress from infancy, and placed by her uncle, her sole guardian, here, with the intention of inducing her to take the veil, that her fortune might descend to him and to his family. It happened, however, that at one of the grand processions of the Virgin, which the nuns were assembled to behold, the young Sasso Ferrato saw, and was seen by the captain of the guards, stationed at the convent, a younger son of the Giustiniani family, and a brother of one of her youthful companions in the convent. His visits to his sister became

very frequent, and Sasso Ferrato generally contrived to accompany her friend on those occasions. They became desperately in love; but the cruel uncle refused his consent, and by arts which intimidated the young and inexperienced mind of Sasso Ferrato, by powerful interest, which rendered the complaints of her lover vain, and by his authority as the representative of her parents, he succeeded in obliging her to take the veil. She only lived two years afterwards.

Her lover became a maniac, and after being confined for some time, continued, during the remaining years of his life, to roam about the neighbourhood of the city, his hair and beard growing wild, his dress neglected, and his manners gloomy and ferocious, though harmless in his actions.

A still more horrible catastrophe ensued at a convent in the north of Italy. An unfortunate girl, whose father was resolved to compel her to take the veil contrary to her inclination, persisted for a long time in her refusal, but was treated with such dreadful brutality at home, that at length she consented; but no sooner had she pronounced her vows, than she requested a private interview with her father at the grate of the convent; and when left alone with him, killed herself before his eyes, cursing him with her latest breath.

This story, horrible and improbable as it may seem, is quite true. I know the family, but refrain, from obvious reasons, from mentioning their name. It is not, however, true that girls are often forced to take the veil; but to say they never are, is equally false. I am informed that young nuns often fall in love with young friars, but the attachment is perfectly platonic. Indeed, so strict are *now* the rules of female monastic life, that I believe it must necessarily be so. But love, it is well known, will break through bolts and bars, and grates and convent walls; and love once inspired a nun with the project of getting out of her convent through a common sewer, which, however unsavoury a path, she frequently practised after night had covered the world with her sable curtain, and wrapped the peaceful sisterhood in the arms of Morpheus. Her nun's dress was

deposited in her chamber, and the exterior dirty garment, with which she passed through the sewer, was exchanged for one her lover wrapped her in at its mouth. She used to walk with him sometimes for hours, but always returned to her convent before the dawn. One evening, however, on returning from her romantic ramble by moonlight, what was her horror to find the sewer—the well-known passage—completely choked up with water, and all entrance impracticable! Discovery would bring certain destruction on herself and her lover. Their lives would be the forfeit, or a solitary dungeon their mildest doom. Concealment was impracticable; for who would harbour them?—flight impossible; for without passports, the gates of the city would be closed against them; and could they scale the walls, no other refuge would be open to them. In this situation the courage and presence of mind of the nun saved them both. She went, dressed in her lover's clothes, to the house of the Cardinal Vicario, who was an old friend of her father's, disturbed the family, had the Cardinal roused out of bed on the plea of the most urgent and important business, obtained a private audience, threw herself at his feet, and confessed all. So earnestly did she implore him to save her and her family from the public disgrace of an exposure, that, melted by her tears, he followed the plan she suggested, ordered his carriage, took her and one confidential chaplain on whose fidelity he could rely, drove to the convent, rang up the portress, and pretending he had received information of a man having entered and being concealed in it, demanded instant admittance to search it, which, in virtue of his office, could not be refused at any hour. He ordered the terrified sisters to remain in their rooms, and having dropped the disguised nun in hers, proceeded in his mock examination till she had disrobed herself, and his attendant had conveyed away the bundle of her clothes; then professing himself perfectly satisfied that the information he had received was false, he left the convent,—taking care, however, next day, to have the sewer so closed that it could never serve for anything but a passage for dirty water again.

The most severe of the female monastic orders is that of

Santa Theresa, in which its unfortunate votaries are doomed to unceasing midnight vigils and daily fasts, to penance, austerity, and mortification, in every possible form; while all intercourse with their friends, all indulgence of the sweet affections of nature, are as sedulously interdicted as if these were crimes of the blackest dye. It is the great merit of their lives that death is to be continually before their eyes, continually present to their thoughts,—like a man that should stand rooted before a clock, with his eyes fixed on the hour to which it was tending, and lose, in its contemplation, the intervening moments. But to all intents and purposes, to all the duties, pleasures, and hopes of life, they are as completely dead as if the grave had already closed over them. And what is it but a living death, a more lingering mode of being buried alive? That punishment which the fanaticism of Pagans inflicted on guilty vestal virgins, the fanaticism of Roman Catholics inflicts upon the innocent—and they call this religion and virtue! Was man, then, born voluntarily to seek to suffer, or was life given to him only to contemplate its close? Was he, whom the very voice of Nature calls to partake of the common blessings Heaven has diffused upon the earth, condemned by the voice of Heaven itself, to exclude himself from the social duties, the natural enjoyments, and the sweet and innocent pleasures of our nature? Is he acting his allotted part, when, like a fiend on earth, he increases the quantity of human misery, and cuts off the sources of natural happiness? But I must restrain my indignation, as vain as it is just; for when did it avail to exclaim against any of the follies, the infatuation, or the crimes of man?

There is in Rome a convent called, and justly called, the *Sepolto Vivo*,* in which are buried alive contumacious or fanatic nuns, from all convents; females condemned by the Inquisition for too little or too much religion—and wives and daughters, whose husbands and fathers have the means to prove they deserve, or the interest to procure the order

* It is near the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore; and there were about forty unfortunate females immured in it when I was in Rome.

for such a dreadful punishment. Instances have occurred, where mere resistance to the will of a parent, or causeless jealousy conceived by a husband, have been followed by this horrible vengeance. What may pass within its walls can never be known; none but its victims may enter, and none of them may quit it. They see no human being, excepting once a-year, when, in the presence of the abbess, they may have an interview with their father or mother; but they must not tell the secrets of their prison-house. They hear no tidings of the world that surrounds them, nor even know when the friends dearest to them are removed by death.

I have been much interested in the fate of a poor nun, who, in the exaltation of a heated imagination, lately fancied herself inspired by heaven, and destined to convert sinners to repentance. The tribunal of the Inquisition has decided that her claims to inspiration are unfounded, and though it appears that she was a fanatic, not an impostor, they have thrown her into this horrible tomb, whither, if it be the fit punishment for all holy cheats, I think its members might all go themselves.

By far the least exceptionable species of nunnery here, is that of the *Tor' de' Specchi*, where a company of respectable women, chiefly widows of small fortune, live together, and lead a rational, regular, and religious life, without binding themselves by any vows, but obey certain rules, and are under the direction of a Superior, who is elected by themselves, and only holds her office for a limited period. They wear a uniform dress, have the power to go out, with certain restrictions, and are much more free and independent, in all respects, than any other similar community. They may leave it if they choose. Such an institution as this in our country would be a respectable and comfortable asylum for unprotected unmarried women, and widows of small fortune. These ladies also educate children. There are likewise several meritorious communities of females, who, under the name of *Maestre Pie*, devote themselves to the education of children of the poor.

I forgot to mention, that in the month of May, there are few convents in which the nuns do not enjoy the privilege of

going out in a body in coaches into the country, where they dine and spend the day at the house, and with the female friends of the Superior or some of the sisters. Some convents have both a whole and a half holiday; others only the latter. I often met them last spring in their annual festivals; and it was delightful to see their countenances of almost anxious joy, and the wild astonished eagerness with which they gazed on the houses, the passengers, the carriages, the fields, the trees, the fair face of nature, and the interdicted figure of man.

It is very common in the higher orders among the laity of both sexes in Rome, to retire into a convent for a few days or a week, (generally Passion week,) of every year, to practice prayer and penance, during which period they strictly conform to the rules of the community, and not unfrequently increase the austerity of their proscribed fasts and vigils: not to mention hearing four sermons a-day.

For this purpose of secular penitence, there is one convent appointed for men, and another for women, which are amongst the most rigorous in their discipline. That destined for the poor females, is in reality a dreary abode; but the Convent of St. John and St. Paul, which is the place of penitence for the male sex, appeared to me rather a desirable retreat. Its long corridors and spacious apartments, are clean, light, and cheerful, and it contains an extensive library.

There is nothing worth notice in the church of this convent, excepting that you are shown the very spot of the martyrdom of St. John and St. Paul,—not the apostles—only two Saints of that name. Lorenzo de' Medici wrote a pious drama, or mystery, commemorating their fate, which was acted at Florence with all the magnificence of his reign. These saints, who were brothers, were treated with distinguished favour by Santa Constantia for being Christians, and beheaded by Julian the Apostate for the same reason. Their death was avenged by a certain St. Mercury,—apparently the old pagan god, enlisted as saint,—who got out of his grave on purpose to kill that emperor in a battle. These murders are the only incidents of the piece; which ends, like Tom Thumb, in the slaughter of the whole dramatis personæ.

The monks had never heard of this drama, but seemed

pleased when I mentioned it, though they did by no means agree to my proposal of having it enacted in honour of their patron saints, on the spot of their martyrdom.

The gardens of this convent, which hang on the summit of the Cœlian Hill, amidst a dark grove of cypress, command one of the most striking prospects which even Rome can boast,—of the mighty Colosseum in the plain below,—the Triumphal Arches,—and the mouldering palace of the Cæsars, which crown the dark summit of the Palatine.

An aged palm-tree, which is supposed to have flourished here from time immemorial, and may almost be reckoned a natural antiquity, still throws its tropical shade in the court of the convent. I once descended from these gardens into the vineyard beneath them, to examine the ancient walls of unknown Roman ruins, which here surround and support the precipitous banks of the Cœlian Hill. Their date, and author, and purpose, are alike unknown. The deep cavities and recesses into which they are formed, are not easily referrible to any known species of building.

Facing the Colosseum, there is an isolated fragment of ruin, to which tradition has assigned the name of the Rostrum of Cicero, and from which, it is said, he harangued the Roman people. I scrambled up its broken walls, and stood on the green platform at its summit, merely because the name of Cicero had attached to it a charm; for there is no probability that his voice ever poured forth its persuasive eloquence here.

The Superior of this convent, with four hundred other priests and friars, was sent to Corsica, and was imprisoned, (as he said) during two years and a half, in a dungeon, upon bread and water, for refusing to take the oath of allegiance to Bonaparte.

At the expiration of that period, he was liberated with his companions from prison, but kept under strict surveillance; and only regained his liberty when the Pope returned, and the French were expelled.

The conduct of these ecclesiastics will be censured or applauded, according to the views of those by whom they are judged. This, however, I will observe, that their fidelity to their banished and degraded master, through exile, poverty,

and imprisonment, when no hope of the re-establishment of his power could actuate them, has something in it of sincerity and disinterestedness, that would seem to place the reality of these qualities above suspicion,—even although their possessors are friars.

LETTER LXXIX.

Miracles.

The age of miracles I thought had passed, but I have discovered my mistake. Within this little month three great miracles have happened in Rome. The last took place yesterday, when all Rome crowded to the Capitol to see an image of the Virgin opening her eyes. Unluckily, we were in the country, and did not return in time to witness it; for as this miracle was thought a very improper one by the higher powers, who would rather she had winked at certain practices which it is thought she had not only opened her own eyes upon, but those of other people—she was carried away, and certain priests, who are supposed to have been in her confidence on this occasion, have been shut up in prison. Two officers of the Guarda Nobile are also in custody in the state-prison at the Castle San Angelo, for expressions which implied no extraordinary admiration of the present state of things. It is so nearly impossible to get at the bottom of anything in Rome, that both these disgraced military and clergy may have given much more reason for their enthralment than we hear of; but this very concealment of their offences makes one rejoice in living under a government, in which the truth must be made known, and in which no man can be shut up in a dungeon at the pleasure either of priests or princes, without being tried and condemned by his fellow-citizens. In this respect, things are neither better nor worse here now, than in the time of the French, who shut people up with quite as little ceremony, and still less lenity.

The last miracle was of a much more orthodox description. The miraculous Madonna, in this case, opened her mouth instead of her eyes, and spoke to an old washerwoman, to whom she imparted her discontent at being so much neg-

lected, and her chapel left in such a dirty and ruinous condition; while so many other Madonnas, no better than she, had theirs made as fine as hands could make them. The Madonna spoke no more, but the old washerwoman proved a very loquacious reporter of her wishes and sentiments. The news of the miracle spread like wildfire; thousands (I am not exaggerating) may be seen every day crowding to this little old chapel, near St. John Lateran, about four in the afternoon, the hour at which the Virgin addressed the washerwoman; it being supposed that this is her favourite time for conversation; but I have not heard that she has made any new observations. Not only the lower orders, but crowds of well-dressed people, and handsome equipages of all sorts, daily throng the door; and the long green avenue that leads under the walls to the Porta San Giovanni, instead of an unbroken solitude, now wears the appearance of a fair.

At the corner of every street, you stumble over a chair set out with a white cloth, a little picture of the Madonna, and a plate for collections to beautify her chapel. You are assailed on all sides with little begging-boxes for the Madonna's beautification; and even the interests of the holy souls in purgatory are forgotten, in the pious zeal to make her fine enough.

To see the luck of some Madonnas!—Thus this Madonna, who opened her mouth to one old washerwoman, has come to great honours and credit; while the other, who opened her eyes to hundreds, has fallen into great disgrace. One Madonna is born, I suppose, according to the proverb, with a silver spoon in her mouth, and another with a pewter one. But this is by no means the whole of our miracles; for, as if one Madonna scorned to be outdone by another, there is an old dirty cobwebby Virgin in the Pantheon, which has lately begun to work miracles, and has drawn such crowds to her shrine, that an unhappy stranger can scarcely get in to see the building itself. It is probably by no means the only miracle which its walls have witnessed. Italy seems always to have been the land of superstition; and the Pagan miracles that are upon record, at least equal the Roman Catholic, both in number and absurdity. Every page of Livy and Plutarch abounds with them. Not a year ever passed without two

or three oxen speaking, though we never hear any of their sayings. Now, even a Madonna but rarely makes use of her tongue, and oxen have entirely given up talking. However, it is a different thing hearing nonsense that was credited ages ago, and seeing it before one's eyes: and when I behold crowds flocking to kneel before these talking and winking Madonnas, I cannot help asking myself if this is really the nineteenth century? One would have thought there had been miracles enough of late in Rome to have satisfied any reasonable people; but the Pope and a detachment of Cardinals are going about every day after dinner in quest of more. They visit all the Madonnas in town, in regular succession. They began with Santa Maria Maggiore, who takes precedence of all the rest here, and they will not leave one unapplied to till they get what they want,—which is rain; for the country, with the unexampled cold and drought of the spring, is dried up, vegetation is pined and withering; and there is but too much reason to dread that the miseries which the poor have suffered during the last dreadful year of scarcity, will be increased tenfold in the next. Pestilence is already added to famine; the lower orders are perishing by hundreds, of a low contagious fever, brought on by want, and numbers have literally died of hunger by the way-sides. This dreadful mortality at present extends all over Italy, and the sufferings of the living are still more cruel and heart-rending than the number of the dead. You daily see human beings crawling on the dung-hills, and feeding on the most loathsome garbage, to satisfy the cravings of nature. That this may occasionally be done to call forth charity, is unquestionable; but it is also done when no eye is visibly near: and the extremity of misery,—the ghastly famine that is written in the looks, cannot be feigned. The failure of those teeming harvests that usually cover the earth, spreads among the improvident and overflowing population of this country, horrors of famine of which you can have no conception. The dying and the dead surround us on all sides; the very streets are crowded with sick, and the contagion of the fever is thought so virulent, that a cordon of troops is drawn around the great hospital of the Borgo San Spirito, to prevent communication with its

infected inmates. The medical treatment in this fever is universally condemned by all the English physicians here; and the general management of the hospitals cannot be sufficiently reprobated. Want of medical skill, and want of care, perhaps equally conduce to the remarkable mortality which reigns in them; but from the returns, it appears that forty-six per cent. die at the Hospital of San Spirito at Rome; whereas at Paris the average is only seven per cent., and in England it seldom exceeds four!

With some few exceptions, I have observed throughout Italy a want of cleanliness, and especially of ventilation, in the hospitals, which is more unpardonable, because they are built upon an immense scale; and yet the patients are crowded together, while spacious wards are left unoccupied, to save the paltry expense of a few additional attendants. Such at least was the reason repeatedly assigned to us for this gross mismanagement. The bad effects of such heat and confinement to the sick must be doubly prejudicial in this climate.

It was originally a truly Italian idea, to erect a great hospital for the recovery of health, in the very spot which, from the days of the ancient Romans to the present time, has been the most noted for its unhealthiness. The Hospital of the Spirito Santo stands in the worst region of the malaria; so that if the object had been to kill instead of cure the patients, this should have been the place chosen for the purpose. If the Hospital of the Incurables, which stands in a very healthy situation, had been placed here, there might have been some excuse for it, since it could scarcely be regretted that the lives of those destined to hopeless sufferings should be shortened. But even abandoned infants are received and nurtured in sickness, at the Hospital of San Spirito; and its benefits, such as they are, are open to all ages, sexes, and nations.

I remember at Florence, in driving about the town, being struck with the extraordinary appearance of an hospital, entirely open to the street, at one end, from top to bottom, and divided from it only by iron bars, so that the passengers had a full view of all the patients in their beds; and of every operation, of whatever nature, which went on during

sickness; while the poor invalids must have been distracted with the incessant rattle of the wheels. Some of the patients who were up, were talking to their acquaintance without the grate; so that diseases never could have a finer opportunity of spreading. The want of decency, as well as common sense and humanity, in this arrangement, is too obvious to require comment. I have, however, only been as yet one day of my life in Florence, and consequently know nothing of the reasons for this strange system,—if reasons there be.

But to return to the miracles, from which I have wandered so far. I understand that not one happened during the whole reign of the French, and that it was not until the streets were purified with lustrations of holy water, on the return of the Pontiff, that they began to operate again.

Private miracles, indeed, affecting individuals, go on quite commonly every day, without exciting the smallest attention. These generally consist in procuring prizes in the lottery, curing diseases, and casting out devils.

The mode of effecting this last description of miracle was communicated to me the other day by an Abate here; and, as I think it extremely curious, I shall relate it to you.

It seems that a certain friar had preached a sermon during Lent, upon the state of the man mentioned in Scripture possessed with seven devils, with so much eloquence and unction, that a simple countryman who heard him, went home, and became convinced that these seven devils had got possession of him. The idea haunted his mind, and subjected him to the most dreadful terrors, till, unable to bear his sufferings, he unbosomed himself to his ghostly father, and asked his counsel. The father, who had some smattering of science, bethought himself at last of a way to rid the honest man of his devils. He told him it would be necessary to combat with the devils singly; and on a day appointed, when the poor man came with a sum of money to serve as a bait for the devil—without which the good father had forewarned him no devil could ever be dislodged—he bound a chain connected with an electrical machine in an adjoining chamber, round his body—lest, as he said, the devil should fly away with him—and having warned him that the shock would be terrible when the devil went out of

him, he left him praying devoutly before an image of the Madonna, and after some time, gave him a pretty smart shock, at which the poor wretch fell insensible on the floor from terror. As soon as he recovered, however, he protested that he had seen the devil fly away out of his mouth, breathing blue flames and sulphur, and that he felt himself greatly relieved. Seven electrical shocks, at due intervals, having extracted seven sums of money from him together with the seven devils, the man was cured, and a great miracle performed.

To us this transaction seemed a notable piece of credulous superstition on the one hand, and fraudulent knavery on the other; but to our friend the Abate, it only seemed an ingenious device to cure of his fears a simpleton, over whose mind reason could have no power; as the physician cured the lady who fancied she had a nest of live earwigs in her stomach, not by arguing with her on the absurdity of such a notion, but by showing her that an earwig was killed with a single drop of oil, and making her swallow a quantity of it. But with respect to the man and his devils, I would ask, why inspire superstitious terrors to conquer them by deceit, and why make him pay so much money?

Yet this is nothing to other things that daily happen. Would you believe that there has actually been in Rome a trial for witchcraft?—a grave formal trial for witchcraft, in the nineteenth century! I began to think I must be mistaken, and that the world had been pushed back about three hundred years. But it is even so.

There is certainly more superstition in the south of Italy than the north, because there is more ignorance. In Milan and in most of the cities of Lombardy, it is rapidly disappearing with the diffusion of knowledge and science. Yet Florence, enlightened as she is, has a reasonable share; and miracles, and miraculous Madonnas, abound nearly as much in Tuscany as in the States of the Church, as I have good reason to know. Even the liquefaction of St. Januarius's blood,—which is generally quoted as the *comble* of superstition, is not without its parallel. At Mantua, a bottle of the blood of Christ is liquefied every year, to the great edification of the compatriots of Virgil. The bottle containing

this *real blood* of Christ was dug up at Mantua in a box, about two centuries ago, with a written assurance that it had been deposited there by a St. Longinus, a Roman centurion, who witnessed the crucifixion, and became converted, and ran away from Judæa to Mantua with this bottle of blood; and after lying sixteen centuries in the ground, the box, the writing, the bottle and the blood, were as fresh as if placed there only the day before!

But I might write a book of miracles, were I to relate the hundredth part of all that take place every year—nay, every day, in Italy. So I have done.

LETTER LXXX.

Blessing of the Horses—Festas—Italian Manners.

We were present to-day at one of the most ridiculous scenes I ever witnessed, even in this country. It was St. Anthony's blessing of the Horses, which began on that saint's day, and lasts for a week; but as this was a *festone*, I rather imagine we saw it in its full glory. We drove to the church of the saint, near Santa Maria Maggiore, and could scarcely make our way through the streets, from the multitudes of horses, mules, asses, oxen, cows, sheep, goats, and dogs, which were journeying along to the place of benediction; their heads, tails, and necks, decorated with bits of coloured riband and other finery, on this their unconscious gala-day. The saint's benediction, though nominally confined to horses, is equally efficacious, and equally bestowed upon all quadrupeds; and I believe there is scarcely a brute in Rome, or the neighbourhood, that has not participated in it.

An immense crowd were assembled in the wide open space in front of the church, and from the number of beasts and men, it looked exactly like a cattle-fair. At the door stood the blessing priest, dressed in his robes, and wielding a brush in his hand, which he continually dipped into a huge bucket of holy water that stood near him, and spirted at the animals as they came up, in unremitting succession, taking off his little skull-cap, and muttering every time,—"*Per intercessionem beati Antonii Abatis, hæc animalia liberantur a malis, in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti.—Amen!*"

The poor priest had such hard work in blessing, that he

was quite exhausted and panting, and his round face looked fiery red with his exertions. The rider, or driver of the creature, always gave some piece of money, larger or smaller, in proportion to his means or generosity, and received an engraving of the saint and a little metallic cross; however, all animals might be blessed gratis.

Several well-dressed people, in very handsome equipages, attended with outriders in splendid liveries, drove up while we were there, and sat uncovered till the benediction was given. Then, having paid what they thought fit, they drove off, and made way for others.

One adventure happened, which afforded us some amusement. A countryman having got a blessing on his beast, putting his whole trust in its power, set off from the church-door at a grand gallop, and had scarcely cleared a hundred yards, before the ungainly animal tumbled down with him, and over its head he rolled into the dirt. He soon got up, however, and shook himself, and so did the horse, without either seeming to be much the worse. The priest seemed not a whit out of countenance at this; and some of the standers-by exclaimed, with laudable steadfastness of faith, "that but for the blessing, they might have broken their necks."

San Antonio must get very rich with this traffic. I cannot omit mentioning, however, that the priest, who very civilly presented us with some of the prints and crosses of San Antonio, could not be prevailed on to accept of any remuneration.

There is a peculiar and more solemn sort of blessing, given to two lambs, on the 21st of January, at the Church of Sta. Agnese *fuori le murà*, from the sainted fleeces of which are manufactured, I believe by the hands of nuns, two holy mantles, called *pallî;* which the Pope presents to the Archbishops, as his principal shepherds. It is incredible the sums of money that used to be given in former days for the least scrap of these precious garments,—but times are sadly changed, as an old priest pathetically observed to me.

They still, however, carry a remnant of the Virgin Mary's own nuptial veil annually in solemn procession to the

Church of Santa Maria del Popolo, where it is still adored; and the marriage of Christ and St. Catherine is still celebrated with great pomp, on the anniversary of their wedding-day, the 29th of January, at the Church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva, and held as a grand Festa. But the Festa which pleased me the most was that of the children. On the eve of Twelfth-Day, the *Crature* (the children), with trembling mingled with hope, anticipate a midnight visit from a frightful old woman, called the *Befana* (an obvious corruption of *Epifania*, the Epiphany), for whom they always take care to leave some portion of their supper, lest she should eat them up; and when they go to bed, they suspend upon the back of a chair a stocking, to receive her expected gifts. This receptacle is always found in the morning to contain some sweet things, or other welcome presents,—which, I need scarcely say, are provided by the mother or the nurse.

There is here a dressed up wooden figure of La Befana, sufficiently hideous,—the bugbear of all naughty girls and boys.

On the eve of the Epiphany, the lighted up Piazza di Sant' Eustachio (the fruit-market) is a very pretty sight,—but the happiness of the *crature* the next morning is a still more delightful one.

Nothing can exceed the strictness with which the observance of the Festas is enforced in Rome. I have seen a printed proclamation which was circulated on the Pope's return, inculcating, in the strongest terms, this duty so long comparatively neglected, of doing nothing on holidays; and denouncing heavy penalties against the disobedient. Idleness, this paramount obligation, thus enjoined by the religion and laws, is, besides, too consonant to the disposition of the people to be disobeyed; and, accordingly, there are upwards of seventy Festas in the year, besides the hebdomadal one of Sunday, in which the sin of being guilty of any useful employment, or, indeed, any employment at all, is cautiously avoided by the Romans. The manner in which these Festas are spent is, indeed, highly characteristic of the people.

After mass the lower orders throng the streets in a state

of complete apathetic vacuity of mind and bodily inertion. You see the strange spectacle of a crowd at rest, content with the delight of listless indolence, and seeming to feel that exertion is positive evil—they neither talk, walk, act, think, sing, dance, smoke, nor play. With a loose coat or cloak folded round them, they stand lounging about, basking in the sun, or lie doggishly on the ground—solitary, though in a crowd,—and grave, though without thought.

I have seen the Tuscan peasants dance merrily to the bagpipe, and the Neapolitan lazzaroni sing at evening to "the light guitar," or dance in rags on the pavement of the Chiaja. I have heard that child of pleasure, the happy Venetian, forgetful of all his wrongs and sorrows, carol through the soft summer night the melodies that endear to him his amphibious country; but I have rarely seen the Roman populace do anything.

Dancing publicly on Sundays is not, indeed, allowed at Rome, any more than plays or operas; but there are many Festas when they might dance, and do not; nor do they resort to music, or any sort of amusement or occupation for pleasure.

The only active diversion of the common people here, is one I scarcely know how to "name to ears polite." It is a sort of chase—a hunting of heads—not for ideas, but for things much more tangible and abundant. You see them eagerly engaged in this pursuit on a Sunday, or Festa, sitting at their doors or windows, or in the open streets; often three, one above another, the middle one at once hunting and being hunted. I remember the Portuguese, even those of the higher orders, used to follow the same sport.

The middle classes dawdle about the streets, or the promenade on the Trinità de' Monti, in a dull, torpified sort of state, not seeming to snail along with any sensation or hope of enjoyment, but because they cannot tell what else to do with themselves.

The women of this shopkeeper class are sometimes dressed most ludicrously fine: satin gowns of all colours, and often white, trailing about the dirty streets, and thin pink or yellow slippers, sticking fast in the mud; their necks, and

often their heads bare. The ladies of Rome, and indeed throughout Italy (by ladies, I mean exclusively the nobility), never walk, never ride on horseback, and never move but in a carriage. Indeed, the men rarely walk, and still more rarely ride. The only time I ever remember seeing a Roman nobleman on horseback, he tumbled off.

The country around Rome, perhaps abounds more in game than any other part of the civilized world, yet no Roman is ever seen to engage in any description of field-sports. Many of the English gentlemen have gone from hence to the mountains, to chase the wild boar; but the Romans never hunt now. The days when even the distant echoes of the lake of Bolsena rang with the horns of Leo X. and his jovial Cardinals, are indeed gone by; and though such diversions may not be very becoming in a Pope, they are very proper for a prince.

But the Roman nobility hunt not, shoot not, read not, write not, think not.—What then do they do?—Why—

> "———through the dull unvaried round of life,
> They keep the joyless tenor of their way."

Sunk in indolence, they perhaps dawdle through the forenoon with their *dama*, like duteous *cavalieri serventi;* and in the afternoon, daily do these unfortunates meander up and down the Corso in their carriages, for two mortal hours, just before dark, when the evening is setting in cold and gloomy. There is some sense in this in summer, but none, that I can discover, in the dead of winter. I have often seen young Italian noblemen performing this dowager-like airing, shut up alone in a coach. On Festas, not only all the nobles who have carriages, but all the bourgeois who can hire them for the occasion, drive up and down the Corso, at this fashionable hour, dressed, of course, as fine as they can make themselves; for the sole diversion must consist in seeing and in being seen,—in furtherance of which laudable end they generally appear in open carriages, in defiance of the cold winter *tramontana*,* and wear their heads and necks uncovered. Often when I have been

* The north-west wind, which blows, as its name implies, from the Alps. It is the mitigated *bise* of Switzerland.

shivering in my furs, I have seen the Roman belles at night-fall sitting motionless in open carriages, exposed to the cutting blast, in this open drawing-room costume. A drawing-room costume, however, here it is not; for, in the evening conversazione, a large bonnet is the usual head-dress, and it often appears with an exposed neck. In general, indeed, it is only in the grand *accademie* of music or dancing, which are equivalent to our private balls and concerts, that the style of evening dress to which we are habitually used in England is seen. But these grand entertainments are rare, and even the humbler conversazione is far from common; so that in a town where there is no theatre, or place of public amusement, except during the Carnival, and where dinner and supper parties are unknown, nothing can be conceived more unsocial, or more *gloomily* domestic, than the habits of the nobility of Rome.

It is more certain, that before the spoliations and heavy contributions arbitrarily levied upon them by the French, by which numbers of ancient families were reduced to complete beggary, and almost all to comparative indigence, their lives were much gayer, and their intercourse, both with each other and with strangers, much more frequent and unconstrained. To this, not only the Romans themselves, but many of our English friends who have been at Rome at different periods (from fourteen to thirty years back), and are now revisiting it, bear witness. It certainly seems strange, that even poverty should put an end to society that costs nothing; for in the few Roman conver-versazioni that still remain (the wrecks of happier days), no refreshment whatever, not even a glass of *eau sucrée*, is ever offered. But the pomp of long trains of liveried menials, without which the proud Roman will not open his house, few can boast, and many have no houses to open. Their palaces are let to strangers, converted into shops or cafés, half shut up, or wholly abandoned. In general, the poor duke, count, or marquis,—the poorest denizen of his own palace,—inhabits some mean apartment in the attics, among obscurity, dirt, pride, penury, and wretchedness.

Even among those noble families whose once princely

revenues, however diminished, are still considerable, not even the outward semblance of cordiality, or the hollowness of the courtesies of polished life, seems to exist; but cold repulsive distrust and dislike are openly manifested.

Ancient feuds and jealousies seem to have abated nothing of their bitterness; and in the recent changes and revolutions, new ones have been engendered. Real or imaginary wrongs, political differences, private pique and quarrels, envy, jealousy, and suspicion, have combined to alienate these few from each other.

Almost the only Roman house now which is regularly open for a conversazione in the old style, and to which all who have been introduced have a general invitation, is that of the Duchess di Fiano, a woman of considerable spirit and talent, who is wise enough not to forego the pleasures of society, because she has lost those of opulence. She receives company on the evenings of the two ordinary weekly Festas, Sunday and Thursday. Thursday, being before these two days of mortification (Friday and Saturday), is considered a *festina;* but Sunday, being after them, is a grand Festa.

This lady contrives to make her parties tolerably pleasant, without music, dancing, cards, books, prints, amusements, or refreshments of any sort. It is literally a *conversazione;* for there is nothing else to be had, and not always even that. Whether it is from the perversity of human nature, that people are always less inclined to what they are obliged to do, or not, I cannot say, but sometimes the conversation languishes, and I have serious apprehensions that we shall all begin to yawn in each other's faces. One advantage is, that one need never stay above ten minutes, if it should wear this dull aspect, but drive off in search of something better. Few Romans are to be seen at these parties, but all the ambassadors and distinguished foreigners of all countries. Of late there has been a great intermixture of English.

The *pensieri stretti* are certainly the ruling principle of Italian society. The set bows and unmeaning compliments, the form and parade, the restraint, the finesse, the total want of confidence, and of the flow of nature and feeling,

take from society its true charm, and render it a scene where you perceive at once that everybody is acting a part.

The want of hospitality is also to an Englishman a striking picture of Italian character. However intimate you may be with an Italian, however warm the regard he professes for you, however often—if he has been a traveller—he may have been entertained at your table in England, he never dreams of asking you to his. It is common to hear people say, that "Englishmen always think there can be no society without eating and drinking." But it is not the mere want of a dinner that we miss; it is the absence of those social feelings, of that hospitable spirit, of all those kindly overflowings of our nature, that lead us to open our tables, our houses, and our hearts, to the friends we love; and that makes the intercourse with Italians insipid and distasteful to an Englishman.

Excepting the English, the foreign ambassadors are the only people in Rome who have dinner-parties, and they give very good entertainments.

Torlonia—now Duke Torlonia—the banker, has a weekly party, something like an English rout; and music and gambling are there the amusements.

Twice a-week, the fashionable world lounge through the rooms of the French ambassador, Count Blacas. There is a gaming-table for those who like to play, and ices for those who like to eat, and scandal for those who like to talk. But the best parties in Rome are given by a lady whose learning and talents would place her in the first class in any country, and who perhaps, in habits and character, is more Italian than British. I mean the Duchess of Devonshire.

The mass of English visitors give chiefly to the English such parties at Rome as they would give in London, only on a smaller, duller, meaner scale. At these there are few foreigners, excepting a certain Cardinal, who goes everywhere, and is a great flirt of the English ladies, and perhaps some half dozen of different nations besides.

Occasionally, the Austrian, Neapolitan, Portuguese, and French ambassadors, open their houses for a grand *ricevimento*, or *accademia* of music, or dancing, and these are at-

tended by many of the Roman nobles and Cardinals. But at the first sound of the dance, the red-legged race must vanish, like evil spirits at the crowing of the cock. One great cause of the stagnation of society in Rome, is evidently the want of the lead and impulse of its head. A court which has its fêtes in the church, instead of the drawing-room, can be no promoter of gaiety; and the princely priests, who form its members, can *now* give no entertainments, because they can *now* receive no ladies. Besides, where ladies do not reign, the spirit of society is wanting.

I have, however, spent many delightful hours in the select circles of those who neither derive their consideration from rank nor fortune; and where I have rarely seen any English face except my own. I speak of Roman families, as well as foreigners.

Lucien Buonaparte receives, in the evening, in his own family circle, without form, a select few, who have been particularly presented to him; and those who have once felt the charm of that chosen society, will not easily relinquish it. His sister, the Princess Pauline, sees only her particular friends; and perhaps more gentlemen than ladies are included among them.

Rome, from its peculiar attractions, must always be the chosen resort of the most enlightened strangers, as it is the permanent residence of many men of the first genius of the age. It therefore possesses, to a certain degree, some of the best elements of society; and yet it must be owned, that neither Rome, nor any part of Italy, can boast the splendour or brilliancy of the first circles of London, or even of Paris. The tone of Fashion, fortune, high-bred ease, and polished gaiety, is wanting. The framing of the picture is not good.

A traveller always exposes himself to suspicion, who censures the society of the country which he visits. Even by his own countrymen he is thought an illiberal and prejudiced—or, at best, an incompetent judge. Whereas, he who praises, obtains at an easy rate, a reputation for candour, liberality, and discernment. Fully sensible of this, and of the invidious nature of the office I am undertaking, I still must, if I am to speak at all, speak what I think. We na-

turally, wherever we go, compare the state of society and manners to those of our own country, and that comparison, I must say, tends much to the disadvantage of Italy.

From the false inferences and egregious misconceptions into which many enlightened foreigners have fallen in judging of English manners, I feel considerable diffidence in censuring those of other countries; but prolonged experience, and, I think, impartial observation, have only shown me, in more glaring colours, the general corruption of manners, and contempt of moral duties, which reign in this country. I have endeavoured to divest myself of my English prejudices, but there are some no Englishwoman can wish to get rid of. Accustomed, from our earliest infancy, to all the refinements of social life, to delicacy of sentiment, propriety of conduct, and a high sense of moral rectitude, their violation shocks our habits, our principles, and even our taste. It seems to me that the low standard of morals here degrades manners also.

In the manners and habits, in the very air of the Italian ladies, there is a want of elegance and delicacy. A certain grossness and vulgarity of mind seem to adhere to them in all they do and say. They encourage liberties of speech which would offend and disgust our countrywomen; and the strain of uniform gallantry, hyperbolical flattery, and unadulterated nonsense of the worst description, in which the men usually address them, and which they seem to like and expect, is a very decisive proof of the difference between the female character here and in England. Until a very decided change take place in that of the Italian women, there can be no improvement in the society at large; and I look upon the system of *cavalieri serventi* to be destructive of the morals, the usefulness, and the respectability of the female character.

It is true, that it is considered necessary here, if a lady visit at all, that she should be attended by her *cavaliere servente;* and if her husband should escort her, she would inevitably be laughed at,—but who are the imposers of this necessity, and who the raisers of the laugh? It is the ladies themselves. The cause of this vile system may be easily found in the still more odious one of marriages being

made an affair of mere convenience,—a bargain transacted by the parents or guardians; the inclinations of the parties thus disposed of, rarely, if ever, being consulted. It sometimes happens that they are betrothed in infancy; and sometimes the whole treaty is concluded without their even meeting. I know an instance in which the *sposa* was introduced to her future lord and master, for the first time, the day before the nuptial ceremony took place. Nor is it only young people dependent upon the will of their parents, who are thus tied together for life. A young nobleman of my acquaintance, completely his own master, and possessed of a reasonable share of sense, and abundance of self-will about other things, lately passively took a woman whom his f nds singled out for him as a suitable match, never dreaming of choosing for himself.

A man *may* fall in love and marry, in Italy, but it is a rare occurrence. Both sexes generally marry without love, and love without marrying. With such unions, it is evident there cannot be much domestic happiness. The lady, sooner or later, looks out for a *cavaliere servente*. This privilege, indeed, is not, as has been pretended, stipulated in the marriage-contract, for that would be quite unnecessary,—no husband ever dreams of opposing this just right; and if he did, he would be exposed to universal derision. In general, he seems quite reconciled to it, and the lady, the cavaliere, and the husband, harmoniously form what a witty friend of mine once called an *equilatero triangolo*. The only thing that surprises me in Italy is, that there ever should be such a thing as a husband at all. Such things are, however, and the poor man often consoles himself by choosing a lady to his own taste, and becoming the *cavaliere servente* of some other man's wife; or, disliking the shackles of this servitude, he amuses himself with more general gallantry, or more varied intrigues. Indeed, if the husband's lot be hard, that of the *cavaliere servente* is harder still. How the Italian ladies get any man to submit to it, is to me incomprehensible. I am certain no Englishman could be made into one for a single week, by any art or contrivance. These unfortunate creatures must submit to all their mistress's humours, and obey all her commands,—run up and down

wherever she directs them, tie her shoe, carry her lap-dog or pocket-handkerchief, flirt her fan, and flatter her vanity; be constant in their attendance on her morning toilet, her evening airing, and her nightly opera. He must retire before dinner,—for she and her *caro sposo* dine tête-à-tête, and he must return after. Sometimes one lady has two or three of these poor animals, whom she distinguishes by different degrees of favour, but in general one is the stated allowance; and constancy to her *cavaliere* is considered highly praiseworthy, though attachment to her husband is only laughed at; I am serious in asserting that it *is* laughed at,—I mean, that a woman who has no *cavaliere servente* at all, and makes her husband her companion and protector, is despised and ridiculed by all her female acquaintance. The instances are indeed rare.

I am, however, far from intending to insinuate that the connexion between a lady and her *cavaliere servente* is always, or even generally, of a criminal nature. But I will say, that nobody can prove that it is innocent. We may charitably believe that she is virtuous; but we cannot feel the same certainty of the purity of her character as we do of that of an Englishwoman, who has no such connexion. The fair Italian admits him at all hours, constantly associates with him, exacts unremitting attention from him, and lays herself under daily, and often pecuniary, obligations to him. She may be innocent; but we also feel it is possible she may not. Yet, granting the connexion to be purely platonic, is it likely to be conducive to domestic happiness, or female respectability, that a woman should allow her time, thoughts, and affections, to be more devoted to her lover than her husband; that she should take more pains to please him, and live more in his society? or, granting him not to be her lover, but only her friend, is it desirable that she should have a better and dearer friend than her husband? I will not say that the system of *cavalieri serventi* is universal. There is no rule without exceptions. But after a two years' residence in Italy, and a very general acquaintance among the Italians, I have known very few without them; except brides, who as yet have not chosen them, or aged ladies, who have lost them. In the past,

present, or future tense, *cavalieri serventi* are common to them all.

But whatever may be our opinion of the nature of this connexion, and of the virtue of the fair Italians, that of their own countrymen, as well as of all the foreigners of all nations whom I have heard speak of them, is undeviating as to their general frailty. Indeed, to do them justice, the very pretence of virtue is often wanting. Such is the general toleration of vice, that no extremes of licentiousness, however open,—no amours, however numerous or notorious, —ever, in this country, exclude a woman from the society in which her rank entitles her to move.

In the other sex it is the same. The most dishonourable and contemptible conduct a man can be guilty of, will not banish him from his place in society. The countenance thus given to unblushing profligacy, and the indifference, perhaps the sneers, with which virtue is received, is one of the most painfully convincing proofs of the depraved state of morals.

The Italian noblemen, for the most part, are ill-educated, ignorant, and illiterate. I could give some curious proofs of this, but I will content myself with mentioning one, which I witnessed the other night at the Opera, when half a dozen dukes, marquesses, and counts, from different parts of Italy, who were in the box with us, began disputing whether Peru, which happened to be the scene of the piece, was in the East Indies, in Africa, or, as one of them, for a wonder, was inclined to think—in America!

It is not, however, so much their want of knowledge, as their want of principle, that renders them despicable. No ennobling pursuit, no honourable end of existence, gives its useful stimulus to their lives, or energy, dignity, and consistency, to their characters. In little things as well as great, their conduct is mean. At a select ball given by the King of Naples in the Royal Palace, I remember seeing numbers of the principal Neapolitan nobility who made it their sole occupation to stand beside the tables of refreshments, and pocket the cakes and sweetmeats by large handfuls, as fast as the servants brought them. Their dresses, for it was a fancy-dress ball, seemed to be com-

posed of large sacks, from the quantity which they contained.

In Sicily, at the British mess-table, some friends of ours were eye-witnesses to the fact of the silver spoons being pocketed by two Sicilian noblemen, who dined there by invitation, and this circumstance happened more than once.

I might easily multiply instances, but I will only add, that, in two cases which came under my own knowledge at Naples, two noblemen of the first consideration there, cheated two English friends of ours, to whom they had let a part of their houses, in the most dishonourable manner. One of them, after letting his rooms, by a written agreement, on the same terms as those on which the preceding occupier had rented them, pledged his solemn word of honour that he had received from him a much higher price than, on investigation, it was proved to be; and the other, with whom the agreement was verbal, repeatedly sent back the proffered monthly payments, expressing a wish to receive it all when our friend quitted his house; at which time he demanded double the stipulated sum, and confirmed his assertion on oath. Anything may be proved at Naples, for witnesses regularly attend the courts to be hired to swear to any fact; and our friend was obliged to pay this iniquitous demand.

Another Italian nobleman swindled one of our countrymen out of a large sum of money, in a still more dishonourable way; and though, notwithstanding the frequent instances I have seen of them, I would still hope that such instances and such characters are not common, yet the fact of these men, and such as these, being received into society, is a proof of that extreme laxity of morals, that want of high feelings of honour, and that lamentable toleration of vice, which I have already noticed. In England, after such conduct, would men be received into society at all; or, indeed, could England produce men of birth and family capable of such conduct?

I know, however, some Italian noblemen incapable of a dishonourable action, and perfect gentlemen, both in manners and mind; but I know very few who are not frivolous

and dissipated, to the neglect of private duties and moral restraints.

One great defect in the constitution of society on the continent, is the want of the order of commons, that middle rank which links together by insensible gradations the high and the low, and diffuses propriety, cultivation, and honourable ambition through all. From the want of this, the privilege of nobility is tenaciously preserved, and injudiciously extended. Every son of a count is also a count, and all his son's sons are counts also. These nobles follow no plebeian profession; the church and the army alone are open to them; there is no navy; commerce, the source of the wealth and greatness of Italy, is extinct; or, at least, what remains, is generally carried on by foreigners, never by native nobles. Bankers sometimes become noblemen, but noblemen seldom become bankers.

Medicine is not considered the profession of a gentleman, and is most injudiciously despised: for common sense would surely dictate, that those to whom we entrust our life and health, should have every advantage of education, character, and respectability; and that such an office should not be filled by men of low birth, limited means, and dubious reputation. In small towns, the physician is chosen by the corporation, from whom he receives a small salary, and his patients pay him nothing; though it is customary to send him a small annual present. If discontented with their own, they are at full liberty to have the physician of any neighbouring town, whom then they must remunerate; and as there is a hope of such employments, and of being chosen to fill a more lucrative situation, or *condotta*, as it is called, the spur of interest is not wanting. In capitals, of course, every practitioner sets up for himself, and all have a train of young pupils, who, like Gil Blas and Doctor Sangrado, are taught to kill according to their master's recipe; and in due season these tyros are generally elected physicians to country places,—or go *in condotta*, as they call it—unless they choose to remain in the metropolis. I do not mean to say that there are not men of great medical skill and science in Italy, but—I speak from the information of better judges than myself—the general standard is far below that of

England; nor is the profession at all pursued by the first classes.

Law is much more respected, and consequently more respectable than medicine. Every small town always elects its *podestà*, who is changed triennially, lest he should imbibe partialities.

Thus debarred by custom, from useful and respectable professions, the younger sons, and the whole numerous race of poor nobles in Italy, have often recourse for subsistence to a state of the most humiliating servility and dependence, to fawning, flattery, and *cavalieri-serventi*-ship,—and to arts and employments, I am afraid, even worse than these.

There is a lamentable want of true dignity and of proper pride among the Italian nobles. They will not practise useful employments; but too often stoop to base actions. Counts, in full dress, often come to you a-begging; and Marcheses, with lace veils and splendid necklaces, will thankfully accept half-a-crown. A woman dressed very expensively begged of us the other day in the streets, and we have had several visits from men of rank, soliciting charity. It may be said of them, that "they cannot dig, but to beg they are *not* ashamed."

Generally speaking, the fair Italians are certainly not women of cultivated minds, or fine accomplishments. They are occupied with pursuits of the most puerile vanity; they carry their passion for dress to the most ruinous extravagance, and are victims of languor, indolence, and ennui. The Neapolitan ladies are more addicted to gambling than the Romans; though there are some here entirely given up to it, and on whose countenances I read, at the nightly faro table, the deadly passion of their souls.

The Italian ladies scarcely ever nurse their children, or attend to their education. The boys are instructed at home by some domestic chaplain, or placed in public seminaries. The girls are either brought up at home, where they have no proper governess—and their mothers are seldom qualified, and still more rarely disposed to fulfil the office; or else they are educated in convents by nuns, who are too often ignorant, prejudiced, and bigoted, and perhaps less fitted for the important task of forming the female charac-

ter than any other class of women: they escape from this gloomy prison to the world, without having formed a taste for any rational pursuits or domestic pleasures; are married to some man chosen for them by their parents, and to whom they must consequently be indifferent;—and what better can be expected from them?

The exclusion of young unmarried women from society in this country, deprives it of one of its greatest charms. I am ready, indeed, to own, that too many young ladies, just come out, weigh at times somewhat heavily on a party in our own country; but conceive what a blank the absence of the whole would make, and you will better understand the variety, and interest, and animation they give to it!

Though the fair sex in this country are generally extremely ignorant, there are certainly many very learned women in Italy; so learned, that here, where there is no literary Salic law, the chairs in the university have often, both in past and present times, been filled by female professors. Signora Tambroni, late professor of Greek in the university of Bologna, only died within these few months, though she retired from her situation a few years ago; nor was she less remarkable for her piety and excellence than for her uncommon attainments.

With a few bright exceptions, however, it unfortunately happens, that the class of literary women in Italy are too *violently* literary. The blues are too deep a blue. They are either wholly unlearned, or overpoweringly learned. A taste for literature is not generally diffused and intermingled with other pursuits and pleasures, as in England; it is confined to a few, and reigns in them without control. Neither does the love of letters exclude the love of adulation. Their vanity is of a different cast, but not less insatiable than that of the other fair Italians. They entertain you too much with talking of their works, or repeating their own compositions; and their houses are generally infested by a herd of male scribblers, who make large demands on the patience and applause of their auditors, by reading or reciting their various works in verse or prose; and bepraise each other, that they may be praised themselves.

I have spoken, somewhat too much at length, perhaps, on the character of the higher classes; and I am sorry I cannot say much for the morals of the middle and lower ranks, among whom truth, honesty, and industry, are rare and little prized. They will cheat if they can, and they sometimes take more pains to accomplish this than would have enabled them to gain far more by fair-dealing. When detected in falsehood and imposition, they show a wonderful degree of coolness and carelessness. I have met with honest and excellent Italians in all ranks; but I must say, knavery, meanness, and profligacy, are far more common.

The venality of the people of Rome is, however, proverbial, even in Italy. It is a common saying, that a Roman '*venderebbe il sole per cinque paoli*,' 'would sell the sun itself for two-pence.'

Their indolence, however, is, to an Englishman, the most extraordinary feature of their character. I have frequently, in asking for goods at a shop in Rome, been answered with a drawling '*non c'è*,' even when I saw them before my eyes; and once was actually told they were too high to reach! Nay, a shoemaker, after getting through the labour of taking my measure, resigned my future custom, rather than take the shoes home at the distance of two streets. Another, three months ago, agreed to make me two pairs, and still continues to promise them 'next week.'

The women of these classes are indolent, useless, and vain. They never seem employed about domestic cares; in fact, the small matter of cleaning, which is bestowed upon a house, is generally done by men. It is they who make the beds and dust the rooms. They cook; they clean; and sometimes even make gowns. I never shall forget my astonishment at Naples, in sending for a dress-maker, when a man appeared; but he professed his capacity for the undertaking. I was in haste, and he stitched me up a very superb ball-dress before night.

In Rome, however, I think the dressmakers, and all the washerwomen, are of the female gender. But the Roman females are really generally a useless indolent set; slovenly and dirty in their persons and dress at home, and tawdrily fine when they go abroad. Their virtue, I fear, cannot be

much boasted of, and, like their superiors, few of them are without their lovers and their intrigues. I know the handsome wife of a substantial shop-keeper, who, with the consent of her husband, has been the mistress of three successive noblemen, Italian and foreign, and lived with them. The last sent her back in disgrace, on discovering, that even in his house, she had contrived to receive her own favoured lover. The husband took her back, and they are now living together.

Another tradesman makes over his wife at this moment to a nobleman, for a certain annual compensation, and yet these men do not seem to be despised for it. These facts I know to be true, beyond the possibility of doubt; and, in spite of their grossness, I mention them, because you cannot otherwise conceive the state of morals in this country.

The celibacy of the clergy is another cause of the want of virtue among the women; for, by the perverse and unnatural institutions of the church, those who ought to be guardians, are too often in secret the corrupters of morals. They thus strike at the root and bond of all morality; for the virtue of a community will always be found to be in proportion to the chastity of the women.

But I began about the Blessing of the Horses, and I have been led, I know not how, into a long disquisition on the morals and manners of the Italians.

Much more might be said upon them, but the subject is not particularly pleasant, where we find so much to censure, and so little to approve. In fine, the censure of Juvenal may still be passed upon the Romans—

"——— hic vivimus ambitiosâ
Paupertate omnes."

LETTER LXXXI.

The Carnival.

The Romans, in throwing off the shackles of moral restraint, do not seem to have gained much gaiety or pleasure by their release. Nothing is more striking to a stranger, than the sombre air which marks every countenance, from the lowest to the highest in Rome. The faces even of the young are rarely lighted up with smiles; a laugh is seldom heard, and a merry countenance strikes us with amazement, from its novelty. Rome looks like a city whose inhabitants have passed through the cave of Trophonius. Yet, will it be believed, that this serious, this unsmiling people, rush into the sports of the Carnival with a passionate eagerness far surpassing all the rest of the Italians? They are madly fond of the Roman Catholic Saturnalia; and, by a strange annual metamorphosis, from the most grave and solemn, suddenly become the most wild and extravagant people in the creation. It seems as if some sudden delirium had seized them. All ranks, classes, ages, and sexes,—under the same intoxication of high spirits, parade the streets. The poor starve, work, pawn, beg, borrow, steal,—do anything to procure a mask and a dress; and when the bell of the Capitol, after mid-day, gives licence to the reign of folly to commence, the most ridiculous figures issue forth,—wild for their favourite diversion. Characters they can scarcely be called, since there is no attempt at supporting, or even looking them,—either in the Corso in the morning, or the Festino (the masked ball) in the evening. Their only aim is to dress themselves, and "to fool it to the top of their bent," and they do both to admiration. They assume rich, picturesque, grotesque, or buffoon costumes, according as it is their object to excite admiration, laughter, or love. They may assume any disguise but what

is connected with religion or government. They are neither permitted to be cardinals, priests, nuns, pilgrims, hermits, friars, magistrates, or ministers. In general, the motley multitude is made up of indescribable monsters. But Punch and Harlequin abound. Pantaloon is a prime favourite. The Doctor of Bologna is a great man; and *Pagliataccio*, a sort of clown or fool, dressed all in white, even to the mask, is the most popular of all. Turks, Jews, bakers, cooks, and *camerieri*, are common. The female costumes of the Italian peasantry, especially of the vicinity, imitated in gay spangled materials, are the favourite dress of the young women. Some, however, go as Jewesses, because then they may accost whom they please, without any breach of decorum. Many of both sexes are dressed entirely in white, even to the masks, with shepherds' hats; many in black dominos, their heads covered with a black silk hood, which is a complete disguise; and many,—perhaps the majority,—wear no mask at all, but appear in gay dresses. The proportion of masks here, however, is far greater than at Naples. When a carriage contains masks, the servants, and sometimes the horses, are often masked also, and the coachman generally appears in the shape of an old woman.

The Carnival is just terminated, and we find it as amusing here as it was stupid last year at Naples and Florence. Even Venice, I hear, has lost her ancient pre-eminence in its diversions; nor is it wonderful that, pining as she is under a mortal atrophy, she should want the spirit for gaiety now. Rome is the place in which it is now seen to the greatest perfection; and for a day or two it is really an amusing scene.

The Carnival, properly speaking, begins after Christmas-day, and ends with the commencement of Lent, and during that period the opera and theatres are licensed; but it is only during the last eight days,—allowing for the intervening Fridays and Sunday,—that masking is allowed in the streets. The Corso is the scene of this curious revelry: the windows and balconies are hung with rich draperies and filled with gaily dressed spectators. The little raised *trottoirs* by the side, are set out with chairs, which are let, and occupied by rows of masks. The street is, besides, crowded with

pedestrians, masked and unmasked; and two rows of carriages, close behind each other, make a continual promenade Notwithstanding the crowd, the narrowness of the street, and the multitude of foot-passengers intermixed with the carriages, no accident ever happens; and though a few of the horse-guards are stationed at intervals to preserve order, and prevent the carriages from leaving their line, I never saw any occasion for their interference.

Both the masked and unmasked carry on the war by pelting each other with large handfuls of what ought to be comfits; but these being too costly to be used in such profusion, they are actually nothing more than *pozzolana* covered with plaster of Paris, and manufactured for the purpose, under the name of *confetti de gesso* (plaster comfits). This coating flies off into lime-dust, and completely whitens the figures of the combatants; but its pungency sometimes does serious mischief to the eyes.

Strangers seldom attack you, but those who know you, as seldom let you escape; and we, being unmasked, and in an open carriage, were generally most unmercifully pelted by masked antagonists. We took care to return the compliment with interest,—abundance of this material, which may be called the wit of the masquerade, being on sale, so that you can never be at loss for a repartee.

Sometimes, indeed, we were assailed by an unexpected volley from some passing pedestrian mask, on whom we could at the time, inflict no retaliation; but we never failed to mark him as a subject for future retribution, when the course of the promenade brought him again within our reach.

It often happens, in the many stops of the carriages, that two in the opposite lines begin the assault, and quantities of ammunition being poured in, a furious pitched battle is carried on, until the cavalcade being put in motion again, separates the combatants. We sometimes received a discharge of real comfits; but they came "like angels' visits, few, and far between."

Half a dozen masks were often hanging together on the back of our carriage, chattering to us in all languages; and in many of them we recognised our English or foreign

acquaintance. But the Italians seem to communicate with each other less by words than signs. It is wonderful with what rapidity and facility they can carry on this intercourse, at any visible distance; and they thus converse through the medium of the eye, not the ear. Whether this custom originated in that ancient jealousy which secluded Italian women so rigorously from society; or in that inquisitorial government which still renders freedom of speech dangerous, I shall not inquire; but it is certain that it is a language as well understood by all Italians as their mother tongue. The signs they use are chiefly made by touching certain features, or parts of the face with the fingers, or the whole hand, in a particular manner; and they thus express love, flattery, supplication, admiration, jealousy, disdain, aversion, assent, dissent, &c. These signs are used by all classes, and at all time—even at church. At the church of the SS. Apostoli, for example, which, on Sundays, at the last mass, is the fashionable resort of the fine women and intriguing belles of Rome, a great deal of this mute conversation may be seen going forward. The demeanour of the ladies, indeed, is there generally distinguished by no small appearance of coquetry and flirtation, while that of the gentlemen is marked by strong signs of devotion and adoration—which are expressed in the language of the eyes, and in this still more explicit language of signs, which is to conversation exactly what short-hand is to writing. This species of telegraphic communication between the sexes is so rapid, so unmeaning in appearance, and yet so expressive, that it is scarcely possible for the most watchful jealousy to prevent, or even to detect it, if any care be taken to conceal it. It struck me that more of it goes on during the Carnival than at any other period.

Every day of the masquerade the Corso becomes more crowded and more animated, till, on the last, the number and spirit of the masks, the skirmishes of sweetmeats and lime-dust, and the shouts and ecstacies of all, surpass description.

The whole ends by *extinguishing* the Carnival. Just before dark, all the masks appear with a lighted taper, labouring to blow out their neighbour's candle and keep

in their own. I can easily believe that you cannot conceive the fun of this, unless you were in the midst of it; but, ridiculous as it may appear, I assure you we laughed ourselves merry at this absurd scene, and that great philosopher, Mr.——, nearly went into convulsions. I am told the masking during the Carnival used to be far more splendid in former times than it is now—that eastern monarchs, followed by their Ethiopian slaves; cars of victory, with laurel-crowned heroes; Roman processions; and the triumph of Bacchus, surrounded by Silenus and all his crew of drunken Fauns and possessed Bacchantes, used to parade the Corso. But nothing so classically magnificent is now to be seen. On the last day, indeed, this year, one large car attracted everybody's attention. It was covered with tapestry, and adorned with immense branches of laurel, amongst which were seated eight or ten black dominos, or demons, who, sheltered by their own evergreens from the pelting of the pitiless storm, dealt their fury mercilessly round in showers of rattling hail. We afterwards found this car contained Prince Leopold of Naples, with some companions.

Every day of the masquerade, there is a race run by small spirited horses, without riders. Their impetuosity in the race, however, is not so much owing to their natural spirit as to the agony of the goads, or balls covered with sharp spikes of metal, suspended from their backs, which at every motion, fall heavily upon the same spot, making large raw gory circles over their bodies, horrible to behold. Sometimes six or eight of these goads are beating their bleeding sides at once, and as if this were not torment enough, fire is likewise applied to them, so that the poor animals, furious under these tortures, often cannot be restrained by the force of eight or ten men, from leaping the cords which confine them at the entrance of the Corso. At the discharge of a cannon, this barrier is withdrawn, and the whole competitors fly off at full speed. The course, which is along the Corso, and consequently paved, is about a mile in length, and the horses are stopped by a piece of cloth which is suspended across the street, near the Venetian Palace, at the *Ripresa de' Barberi*, so called from Barbary horses being the original racers.

THE CORSO.

A little spirited English horse, never meant, however, for a racer, won almost all the prizes, or *palli*, this year. They consist of a rich piece of velvet, furnished at the cost of the Jews, who were formerly compelled to run foot-races themselves—which afforded much christian diversion to the populace. It often happens that some of the horses run aside down other streets; and one day the people waited for the race in vain, the whole of the steeds having gone off together towards St. Peter's. I was not one of the disappointed; having previously witnessed the races twice, I was ever afterwards glad to get out of the way. To see these poor animals thus wantonly tortured and infuriated by pain, is anything but a pleasing or humane spectacle, and one I most certainly never wish to see again.

Priests are forbidden to join in these revels; but who may be present under the mask, I suppose would puzzle even the Pope's infallibility to find out. Occasionally, however, some curious discoveries have been made by chance. In a late Carnival, the horses in a hack carriage, containing two masks, becoming restive, ran off at full speed, threw the coachman from his box, and never stopped till they overturned the vehicle, near the Ponte Sant' Angelo. Both the masks seemed to be severely hurt. The female, who loudly bewailed her sufferings, proved to be a noted lady of no very fair fame; but her male companion, though the blood from his wounded head trickled down his dress, resolutely held on his mask, refused to speak, and though unable to walk, endeavoured to escape from the crowd that wanted to assist him. At length his mask was taken off by force; and he proved to be a Cardinal, whose name I refrain from mentioning.

There are only three *Festini*, or public masked balls, allowed during the Carnival. They are held in the Teatro Alberto, a large handsome *sala*, now only used for this purpose. The stage and pit are open to the masks, and dancing of quadrilles, &c., goes on with much decorum; though I need hardly observe, that none above roturier rank ever participate in this part of the amusement. The price of admittance is about one shilling and sixpence English, and you may guess that the company is not very

select, when I tell you that our Italian servants were there. Yet nothing ever appears which could offend the most fastidious delicacy. The higher orders have boxes, and are generally unmasked; but in the course of the night, they often walk about among the people, and mix with the motley crew, without ever meeting any impertinence or unpleasant adventure.

There is no attempt whatever at supporting characters, and none indeed are assumed. They have no idea of those character masks, which we consider the very essence of a masquerade. The masks are dressed whimsically, grotesquely, laughably, and sometimes tastefully; but they are mere dresses, and they speak in a false squeaking tone, to perplex each other, interchange compliments, or banters, and chatter abundance of nonsense, but not in character. No doubt, a great deal of intrigue may go on, but nothing of it is seen, nor is there much time for it, for the Festino begins at eight, and at twelve everybody is turned out, and the lights extinguished. The only attempt at characters was made by a few Englishmen, who supported their parts admirably, in our style. One, in particular, a Grub-street poet, was excellent; but his ballads, pinned about his hat, his elegies, sonnets, and odes, offered to all, his heroic recitations, his own ecstacies at their beauty, and his tattered and beggarly attire, seriously persuaded some of the Italians, to our infinite entertainment, that he was a poor mad Englishman, in good earnest; and they expressed the most unfeigned compassion for him.

I must end my account of the Carnival with what I ought to have commenced it, by telling you that its amusements are uniformly ushered in by a public execution. If any criminals are destined to condign punishment, they are reserved for this occasion; and I suppose it never happened that some head was not laid on the block at this festive period. Three were guillotined this year. It is done with a view to restrain the people, by the immediate terrors of the example, from the commission of crimes, to which the licence of the season may be supposed to lead. A number of penitents attended these unhappy criminals to the scaffold, as well as the pious brotherhood, who make this their

peculiar duty; and both before and after the execution, they begged alms to say masses for their souls, to which hundreds, even of the very poorest of the people, contributed their mite. These processions of penitents, even during the Carnival, make at times a pious, instead of a profane masquerade. Dressed in long robes of sackcloth, girt with ropes, their heads and faces covered with hoods, and their eyes alone appearing through holes cut for them, they parade the streets, and prostrate themselves before the altar in prayer that the sins committed during this lawless season may be forgiven. I am told, but cannot vouch for the fact, that some of the gayest and most licentious masks on the Corso make this preparation for the sins they intend to commit, and perform subsequent penance again during Lent, in expiation of the score they have run up.

The Carnival, in its licence, its mirth, and its levelling of rank, nay, even in its season, bears an obvious resemblance to the Roman Saturnalia. But it perhaps approaches still more closely to the annual feast of Cybele,* when, according to Livy,† the richest draperies were hung from the windows, masquerading took place in the streets, and every one, disguising himself as he pleased, walked about the city in jest and buffoonery. This is precisely a modern Carnival.

* The Galli, or priests of this goddess, seem to have borne a curious resemblance to some of the Roman Catholic religious orders. They were mendicants, and under the obligation of perpetual celibacy; in short, begging friars. There is a bas-relief in the Capitol which represents one of these priests with a scourge in his hand; so that it would seem flagellation was also practised amongst them as a religious virtue.

† Livy, lib. xxix. cap. 14. It took place on the 27th March, when the simulacrum, or image of the goddess that fell from heaven, was washed in the Almo.

LETTER LXXXII.

Music and the Drama.

I came to Italy expecting to find it the land of song, to hear music wafted in every gale, and every valley vocal with harmony. Great has been my disappointment. I have not only heard very little good music, but very little music at all. During the whole course of the eighteen months that have now nearly elapsed since I first set foot in Italy, during all my travels through the country, and my residence in the towns, the sound of music has seldom met my ear unsought. I find it, indeed, as in all great cities—in public theatres, in crowded assemblies, and stately drawing-rooms; but it is not the spontaneous "voice of the people."

In their constantly recurring festas, when the streets are thronged day after day with a listless loitering crowd, the sound of music is seldom or never heard. It does not beguile these long days of idleness, nor, as among the Spaniards, the Portuguese, and the Germans, is it resorted to after the hours of labour, to charm away their evening cares. Even the artisan, plying his daily task, and "the spinners in the sun," as they sit at their doors, twirling the slow thread on the distaff and spindle, are never heard singing at their work.

The first music that saluted me at Rome, and that was after I had lived nearly a month in it, was the bagpipe.

I was awakened one night from a feverish slumber by the well-known drone of that mellifluous instrument. I imagined, that being in a fever, I was also in a delirium; but it was by no means an ecstatic delusion, and these real, or imaginary national tones, were so far from proving a treat to my ungratified ears, that when a second bagpipe set up its throat, and a third joined in the droning chorus, I thought I should have gone distracted.

The next night the same horrible disturbance was repeated; and now convinced it was only too real, I found, upon making inquiry, that numbers of *Zampognari*, or *Piferari*, as these bagpipers are called, annually come up from Campania before Christmas, to play hymns upon their bagpipes to the Virgin, who, if she has any ear for music, must be nearly deafened with this piece of their courtesy.

The serenades that had broken my rest, I found were addressed to a Madonna immediately below my bedroom windows, and for many a night, or, as they call it, morning (about four o'clock), did these pious pipers continue to drone out their strains to this stony image, whose deafness and insensibility I was tempted to envy.

The bagpipe, as my more travelled friends tell me, is a very classical instrument, and extends not only over Italy, but throughout Greece, and is supposed to be one of the most ancient musical (query, unmusical?) instruments in the world. I can only say, that if "Music, heavenly maid!" played upon it

> "——— when she was young,
> And first in early Greece she sung,"

I cannot enter into the poet's regret at not having heard her; but, on the contrary, am perfectly satisfied

> "With all that charms this laggard age;"

to wit—the strains she gives us now she has grown old.

Some wandering harpers from the south of Italy, too, sometimes visit Rome. Their music is simple, very peculiar, probably very ancient, and certainly very sweet. They are called *Carciofolari*. Excepting these itinerant musicians, and one old blind man, who is stationary, I have heard no street music in Rome, and very little in any town, village, or hamlet of Italy, in which it has been my lot to sojourn, excepting Naples and Venice. There the voice of music is continually heard at evening, over the calm waters of the Bay of Naples and the canals of the Adriatic,—on the Chiaja and the Piazza di San' Marco. The favourite instrument in both places is the guitar, or viola,—an excellent accompaniment for the voice. When I was at Naples, 'Ricciordello Antonio,' a beautiful playful little air, was the

most popular among the lazzaroni; and at Venice, 'Buona notte, Amato bene,' met me at every corner; both sung with a spirit and gaiety that gave them an inexpressible charm.

One thing, indeed, I must remark, that wherever one *does* hear music in Italy, it is really music (excepting the bagpipe)—something deserving of the name.

One's ear is never tortured with the horrible tunes, executed in a still more horrible style, with which it is continually assailed in England. But the fact is, music with us is an exotic, and the plant has a sickly and artificial existence. In the great hotbed of London alone it comes to any perfection, and there, though fine, it is forced.

If Italy bears away the palm in vocal excellence, Germany far surpasses it in instrumental music, in the refined and universal taste, or rather passion, for music, diffused among all classes, and in the excellence both of the composition and execution. There you may hear the compositions of Mozart, and Haydn, and Beethoven, in the dwelling of every artisan; but in Italy, her own imm rtal ancient masters are neglected and forgotten, or heard now only in other lands.

The higher orders have not the same strong passion for music that I expected. It forms no part of the entertainment in their conversaziones, except when a rare *accademia* renders it the sole purpose of the meeting. Indeed it seems less generally than with us, a source of domestic amusement; but I am not sure that this is to be regretted: it may perhaps be doubted, whether the invaluable years of *every* young English lady's life that are devoted to the attainment of a certain degree of expertness in running over the keys of a pianoforte, might not, where there is no natural taste for it, be better employed.

In Italy, though every lady of a certain rank is not a musician, there are many who sing and play with a taste and science worthy of first-rate professional performers. In the other sex there are still more examples of this, though it is said to be less common now than in former times. Italian noblemen may still be found fiddling all night for their own amusement in an orchestra; but these things are, comparatively speaking, rare.

I have frequently attended a weekly *accademia* of music given at Rome by a man who made a fortune by selling fiddle-strings. Notwithstanding his plebeian origin, his concerts are frequented by most of the Roman nobility, by foreign ambassadors, and royal princes. The performers are, for the most part, amateurs, and some of them very good; but who does not see, that though the company at large loudly applaud the performance, and cry, 'How charming! how divine!' their whole souls are intent upon the looks, dress, flirtations, and admirations of each other,—upon bowing, smiling, coquetting, manœuvring,—upon anything, in short, but the music; and that, though the ostensible, it is not the real source of attraction?

Rome has at present the worst opera in Italy, but the best sacred music in the world. In all the churches, the festas of the saints to whom they are dedicated are annually celebrated with a grand sacred concert of vocal and instrumental music, by a band of professional performers; and, on these occasions—in the Jesuits' church at the close of the old, and commencement of the new year,—in the chapel of the choir at St. Peter's on Sundays, at vespers during Lent and Advent,—and more particularly in the three grand Misereres of the Holy Week, and the accademias given at that time in private houses,—the music is indeed of unrivalled excellence, and fraught with a lofty sublimity and pathos, to which nothing I ever heard elsewhere even approximates. Yet it is strange, that with such heavenly harmony at command, the ordinary church music should be absolutely bad; indeed, scarcely deserving the name.

In the chapel of a convent on the Quirinal Hill, called, I think, the Church, or Chapel of Santa Anna, the singing of the nuns, at vespers, is singularly touching. In this chapel there is the perpetual exposition of the Host; and, in consequence, it is perpetually illuminated, night and day, with wax tapers. I have never entered it without finding it filled with people, all on their knees on the marble floor, and a silence so profound reigning through it, that every half-stifled sigh of penitence that broke from them reached the ear. Every being there seemed as unconscious of the pre-

sence of those with whom he was in contact, as if in a desert. No doubt, the awful stillness that prevailed amidst this crowd of people, and the unnatural glare of the illumination within, when all without was bright in day, had their influence in giving effect to the full harmonious voices of the invisible inmates of the cloister, whom men might see no more. But so powerful was the pathos of their choral strain, that it affected many, "albeit unused to the melting mood," even to tears.

The romantic custom of serenades is still very generally practised among the middle and lower classes. On a moonlight evening, the lover conducts a little band of hired musicians below the windows of his mistress, and while they pour forth the melting strains of melody, he stands to watch her appearance, to breathe forth his sighs, or, by mute signs, implore her pity. Her name is echoed in the songs, which are sometimes really composed, and are always supposed to be so, by him. A fair Italian, who lives a few doors from us, has been serenaded almost every night this week, by her enamoured swain.

Though the time of the Carnival, there is only one theatre (La Valle) open here; and even this, like the Fiorentini at Naples, is a mélange of the Opera and the Theatre. The dancing is wretched beyond description; the music is bad, and the acting not many degrees better. Some of the farces and buffooneries, however, have been amusing. 'Gli Ciarlatani,' a farce I saw the other night, had abundance of low humour, and was irresistibly laughable, and well played. I have not yet seen any of the very few good comedies of Goldoni, but I have yawned through several representations of his tedious and trifling colloquies of five acts, without incident, interest, character, or *vis comica*. He really seems to think that the common occurrences of a domestic day, such as drinking a cup of chocolate, sitting down to dinner, scolding the servants, or spoiling the children, are sufficient materials for a drama. One would wonder that any author could ever have written such trash, or that any audience could have listened to it; still more, that any one who had ever written anything so good as a few of his well-known pieces, should have produced so much that is so very bad as

nine-tenths of his puerile trash, misnamed comedies. 'Il Burbero Benefico,' which is one of the best of them, was written at Paris, after a long and diligent study of the French comedy, which it resembles, without equalling; and though it may be a very curious circumstance that he wrote it originally in French, it cannot make it a better play. He has occasionally traits of coarse humour and of character, but never of genuine wit or genius; and everything he ever wrote is tinctured with gross vulgarity, and betrays his extraordinary ignorance, as well as the limited scope of his ideas. Even in the best of his productions, there is a deplorable want of life and interest, and plot and wit. The three wearisome plays upon Richardson's 'Pamela,' though great favourites with the Italians, whose dramatic personifications give as false an idea of the English character, as ours of theirs, are a proof how rarely authors succeed in painting the manners and characters of any nation except their own.

In seizing those of his own gay Venetians, Goldoni has been far more happy, and perhaps, upon the whole, some of the whole host of plays he wrote in that sweet patois, are superior to all those in what he is pleased to call the *lingua Toscana*. My acquaintance with his four-and-forty volumes of comedies, however, is by no means universal, and has been a good deal impeded by an unlucky habit of falling asleep over them.

Goldoni wrote sixteen bad comedies in one year; it would have been better if he had written one good one in sixteen years. He may more properly be called a play-monger than a comic poet. I have never seen any of Alfieri's tragedies, nor indeed any tragedy at all, performed; nor is it likely I should, for Alfieri is much talked of, but little read, and scarcely ever acted. All his plays, except four, were prohibited by the French, from political motives, nor is it likely that the interdict will be taken off by the present governments. The loss is the less, because they are confessedly ill adapted to the stage; they are unpopular in representation, even among the Italians themselves; and such being the case, they may be fine poems, but cannot be considered fine plays.

It is true they bear a high name in Italy, because there they stand alone. Alfieri has no competitor, and wins the prize like a race-horse that walks over the course. They may be comparatively, without being positively good. It may, indeed, seem presumptuous to assert that Alfieri's plays are deficient in dramatic merit, but their total want of success on the stage is surely a decisive proof of it. As compositions they may be fine; but as dramas they are deficient in plot, character, action, interest, incident, and passion, and most of all, in nature. High-sounding sentiments are uttered, and high heroic deeds performed, but by imaginary beings. Alfieri has cast men in moulds of his own, and made them act as he pleases; he has not penetrated into the deep recesses of the human heart, like Shakespeare, and painted from what he traced there. His plays are addressed to the head rather than the heart, and consequently they never touch our hearts, nor move our feelings. Besides, in most of them, there is far too much said and too little done; an unredeemable fault in dramatic composition.

Italy must yield to England, France, and even to Spain, both in tragedy and comedy. I do not speak of the German theatre, because I cannot judge of it in the original, therefore not at all. Italy was the first seat of modern dramatic performances. Long before any other of the nations of Europe had a stage, hundreds of tragedies and comedies were represented here. But what were these *comedie antiche?*—Dry, lifeless imitations of the Grecian and Roman dramatists, tolerated at first with difficulty; even by the learned, never endured by the body of the people, and long since consigned to dust and utter oblivion. In fact, paradoxical as it may seem, the true legitimate drama of life and nature is not the natural growth of Italy. The Opera and the Pantomime, Harlequin and Punchinello, Music and Buffo, are indigenous, and flourish in full perfection. But the Theatre is everywhere secondary to the Opera. While the very names and memories of the singers of Italy are re-echoed with rapture in every country, there are not, nor ever have been, any actors of great popular fame,—not at least in the regular drama; for in the old native *Commedie dell' Arte,*

which Goldoni laboured so hard to banish, while his best works, after all, are formed upon its model, they were excellent in their way. In these, nothing was written,—the action and dialogue were entirely left to the extempore wit of the performers, who had only for a guide the dry bare skeleton,—the *scenario*, as they called it, of the play; which was previously planned, and stuck up behind the scenes; but they filled up the sketch *al improvviso*, with their own colouring; their merry dialogue, their smart repartee, their practical jokes, their buffoonery and grimace. Thus they were at the same moment authors and actors. Their characters, to be sure, were all established. There were Pantalone (Pantaloon) the old Venetian merchant, il Dottore (the Doctor of Bologna), the Neapolitan Pollicinello (Punch), the Bergamasque Arlecchino (Harlequin), a blundering servant, the Calabrian Clown (Giangurgolo or Coriello), the Ferrarese Rogue (Brighella), the Bully of Naples (Spaviento), the Coxcomb of Rome (Gelsomino), and the Simpleton of Milan, whose established name I have forgotten.

All these wore masks. Besides which, there were the Lovers (Gl' Innamorati), in every play, who were sentimental, and were not masked, and spoke in *lingua Toscana*. It was observed to me, by an ingenious Italian, that the extempore nature of these pieces,—the acting in masks, and the whole style of the performance, including, I fear, its licentiousness,—seemed to prove the *Commedie del' Arte* to be the legitimate descendant of the ancient *Atellanæ*. I confess I should be sorry to see anything so truly national, and so highly ingenious, banished Italy altogether; but it is certainly on the wane. The higher orders learn from foreigners to decry and discountenance it, and the lower orders have little voice here.

The Italians show a good deal of the same talent in the management of the *Fantoccini* or *Burattini*—the acting puppets, which are as much superior to the Marionettes of France, as a pantomime to a puppet-show. They are so admirably managed, that one continually forgets they are not real men and women; and their dialogues have all the air of proceeding from their own mouths. I have certainly, hitherto, met with no actors here to compare to those

wooden ones, and I shall not soon forget the diversion I experienced the other night from their performance. They first represented a most laughable little comedy. This was followed by a melo-drama taken from Ariosto, and full of enchantments. The magic mirror, the flying horse, the brazen palace, the Orco, Astolfo's journey to the moon, Bradamante's prowess, &c., &c., were formed into a connected plot of adventure and romance, terminating in Bradamante's marriage with Ruggiero. The last piece was still more classical; it was the tale of Orpheus and Eurydice, *travestied*. Orpheus himself, fiddling, in a huge bag-wig and an old-fashioned court-dress, and all his adventures in hell, and out of it, were inexpressibly laughable. By far the best Fantoccini are at Rome; the next in merit are at Milan.

The ancient *Miracles*, or *Mysteries*, or *Moralities*, the earliest attempts at drama in every country in Europe, and the favourite amusements of the middle ages, still maintain their ground in Italy. Several of these pious plays were performed at Rome this year about Christmas-time. The subjects are taken from Holy Writ. Our Saviour, with the Twelve Apostles and the three Maries; and Saints, and Angels, and Prophets, without end, hold long colloquies together; and the devil seldom fails to perform a principal part. But will it be believed, that the Supreme Being is impiously represented in these wretched mummeries on the public stage, by a strolling actor, and that they blasphemously presume to put into His mouth their low doggrel rhymes?

The time was, indeed, in England, when the parish clerks used "to put forth a play for the goodlie entertainment of the King, the Queen, and all the nobility;" and the famous 'Play of Coventry'* (in forty acts) was represented;—the first act or pageant of which was opened by a set speech from the Deity himself, seated upon his throne. But that an exhibition, which can scarcely be traced in England, even in the fourteenth century, should be tolerated at Rome in the nineteenth—may well excite our unqualified amazement.

* Ludus Coventriæ, or Corpus Christi, a Mystery,—still extant. (Vide Strutt's Sports of the People of England, book iii. chap. ii.)

The state of the regular theatre in Italy, both as to the drama and the performers, is, in all I have seen of it, at a very low ebb. At Naples, however, I was often well amused; at Rome I have almost invariably been wearied or disgusted.

The opera at Rome, I understand, is always bad, but this winter it is intolerable. The instrumental and vocal parts seem to contend in rivalry of wretchedness. Rossini's beautiful 'Tancredi' has been mercilessly murdered all winter; still the boxes of the Argentina are as crowded with the beauty and fashion of Rome, as if the music were of the first description. Nor can it, as at Paris, be the dancing which forms the attraction; for nothing can be so wretched as the ballet.

The best operas are at Milan and Naples; the greater population and consequence of these cities, as well as the splendour and magnitude of the Sala in both places, will probably long enable them to support this superiority. The world can produce no theatres to rival La Scala at Milan, and San Carlo at Naples. The latter is superior in freshness of decoration, but perhaps the other is quite as noble in architecture. The finest singers of Italy are to be found abroad, rather than at home. The superior emoluments which London, and indeed every other capital offers, charms away her native syrens. The low prices of entrance throughout Italy (the highest for the pit being, I think, about eighteen-pence of English money, and a whole box often hired for the night, even during the Carnival, for five shillings), render the salaries of the performers necessarily low. I have, however, sometimes heard, in very unpromising places, a very delightful musical treat. Almost every little town has its opera during some part of the year, and this certainly is a strong proof of a universal passion for music among the people. It would be still stronger, however, if they attended to the music; but I must say, I never was so much disturbed in the box of any woman of fashion at London, as in those of my Italian friends at Milan and Naples, which, with Venice, are reputed, and justly, to be the most musical places in Italy. In fact, the Italians go to the Opera for society, and the night is

spent in paying visits from one box to another, and in incessant chattering. The continual repetition of the same opera during the whole season, is perhaps one great cause of this. I observed, on the only first representation I ever witnessed, that the utmost silence and attention prevailed till the piece was concluded.

In fine, I must end as I have begun, by acknowledging myself disappointed in the music of Italy, disappointed in the quantity, disappointed in the quality, and disappointed in the execution. I expected from it (and who would not?) pre-eminent excellence; but I have heard much finer music, both vocal and instrumental, at the Opera, at the Philharmonic Concerts, in London, and in most of the great, and many of the little towns in Germany, than I have ever heard in any part of Italy. I speak now of cultivated music,—of the music of courts, and operas and concerts. In the untutored music of the people, I am sure there is nothing, among the whole *contadini* of Italy, to compare to the singing of the peasant girls of Unterseen, Brienz, and many parts of German Switzerland and Germany.

The true Italian connoisseurs, indeed, say that music, and musical taste, have wofully degenerated in this country, and I cannot but believe them. Indeed, though such complaints seldom meet with much attention, and are always ascribed to a querulousness that is dissatisfied with the present, I am inclined to believe that they are generally founded on truth. Nobody thinks of saying that taste for the fine arts has declined among the English, or taste for politics among the French, or taste for reformation among the Germans, for these things have greatly and manifestly increased; and so many people would not say that musical taste had declined in Italy, nor should we see so many appearances of it, if it were not in some measure true.

But even if this be the case, Italy is still the second musical country in the world; it must at least rank after Germany. In England, as I before observed, music is an exotic; we have it, indeed, in its highest perfection, as we have grapes in our hot-houses; but the produce is, after all, forced and scanty, and entirely confined to the metropolis,

and even there, to the rich, who often taste, without enjoying it; in fact we import, rather than grow it; and unless we bestowed much labour and expense upon it, we should never have any at all. The English are not naturally a musical people. Nor yet are the French. Neither in France, nor even in French Switzerland—which affords a striking contrast to the German Cantons, where the people are highly musical—in Holland, nor in Belgium, in Great Britain nor in Ireland, have I ever heard anything that deserves to be called music; for the simple national melodies of Scotland, whose beauty and pathos I feel with all the soul of a native, are not that true superior scientific music, that men of cultivated taste, from every part of the world, will equally admire and relish.

Perhaps such music is pretty much confined to Germany and Italy; and perhaps the thing that is most remote from it, is that class of native productions in England and France, which those countries are pleased to denominate music.

LETTER LXXXIII.

IMPROVISATORI—ACCADEMIE.

I HAVE heard one of the most extraordinary Improvisatori that I suppose ever appeared, even in Italy. For four or five successive hours, he continues to pour forth a flood of unpremeditated verse, without the smallest hesitation, or apparent effort, and with far more ease than any of us could, after hard labour, recite a composition by rote. But this is not the wonder. This prodigy can compose entire extempore tragedies on any given subject, with all the plot, incident, and dramatis personæ,—repeat all the parts himself, and bring the whole to a regular dénouement, with as much ease as you and I would carry on a common conversation.

I assure you that I do not exaggerate. No words can do justice to the perfect ease, the energy, and unhesitating flow of verse, in which he poured forth this long, and, in some respects, fine tragedy; for there were scenes and passages in it, that not only possessed real poetic beauty and the warm irresistible eloquence of passion, but might have done honour to a drama deliberately finished off in the closet. I, a poor unskilled foreigner, you may be sure, would not have the presumption to pronounce so decisively upon its positive merits, though I might be allowed to have an opinion of its comparative ones; since I must be as well qualified to judge of one Italian play as another; but the solemn critics who surrounded me—with brows bent to frown, and dispositions prepared to condemn—were themselves carried away into the same extravagant applause admiration, and astonishment which possessed me.

That it was really *improvviso*, not a shadow of doubt could exist, even in the minds of the most incredulous, of whom

before I went, I believe I was one. A variety of subjects, proposed by different persons in company, were written down by a man on the stage, sealed, and thrown into a vase, which was shaken by various people among the audience, and the billet was drawn by a gentleman of our acquaintance. On this occasion it proved to be 'Medea;' a subject so hackneyed, that when Signore Tomaso Sgricci—for that is the name of this extraordinary person—received it on his entrance, he expressed a wish that another lot might be drawn; both from the difficulty of avoiding an imitation of the great writers who had already treated it, and from having very lately, at Florence, dramatized on the same. The Sala, however, resounded with cries of 'Medea! Medea!' to the joy of an Italian gentleman of my acquaintance, behind me, who had heard him on this very theme at Florence, and was curious to see if he would repeat it verbatim. Signore Sgricci bowed, paused a single minute, and then said, that to avoid repetition as much as possible, he would make a different cast of parts. He introduced, as my Florentine friend acknowledged, two new characters, opened the action in a different part of the story, and neither in a single scene, nor even speech, approached to the tragedy he had composed at Florence. The character of Medea, throughout, was supported with wonderful force and effect; and her invocation to the hellish brood was horribly sublime. The second tragedy, which I heard on another occasion, was a much more novel subject; it was the death of Lucretia, which gave far more scope to his powers; and there were many parts in it which absolutely electrified the house, and drew forth loud and continued '*Evviva's!*' of applause. I should observe, that these tragedies were both in verse *sciolto*, without rhyme; but *improvviso* poems, on any given subject and measure, he pours forth with the same inconceivable rapidity.

He is a native of Arezzo (the birth-place of Petrarch), and the harsh Tuscan accent is very distinguishable in his enunciation. His language, however, is remarkably pure, and its flow and variety are most wonderful.

Signore Sgricci is, as far as I know, the only improvisatore who ever attempted tragedy. Of the tribe who

spout forth torrents of verse on every possible theme, there is no end. It is, however, far from being my intention to speak of them disparagingly; on the contrary, I think it a wonderful talent, and one which, I believe, is exclusively Italian; for, though I have heard, in the evenings of summer, a knot of Portuguese peasants singing to their guitar, *improvviso* (which they call *glossare*);—their little extempore songs can scarcely be styled poetry; aspiring to no elevation, fancy, or even regularity of metre, but merely stringing together the rhymes into which their euphonious language naturally runs. The genius of the Italian language affords considerable facility to the composition of verse; yet, when that composition is to be on any given subject, without a moment's pause or hesitation, and in the face of an expecting audience, it is amazing that its difficulties can be conquered at all. Few people in our country would find it easy to make a tolerable dissertation in prose, on any given theme, in such a situation; how much more difficult would they find it, when encumbered with the fetters of rhyme and measure! But the Italian improvisatori could make no extempore oration in prose on a given theme; and this seems to prove that it is a sort of inspiration, or poetic fervour, that carries them on. They often compose with *rime obligate*, that is, the rhymes and measure, as well as subject, are assigned them. This, to my great astonishment, one of them assured me, he found even easier than unshackled composition, because the rhymes being chosen saved him the necessity of searching for them; so that it is plain he adapted the sense to the sound, not the sound to the sense. It is very common, too, to have a *verso obligato*, a distich taken from any popular poet, assigned them, which they must introduce at the end of every eight-line stanza.

It is scarcely possible that verses so composed should ever be very fine, and sometimes they are very bad; but they are occasionally wonderfully pretty, and adorned with images and allusions which it is amazing they should have been able to conjure up in the moment. But the truth is, they have similes and thoughts ready prepared; they are versed in all the common-place of poetry, have all its

hackneyed images at command, and bring in on all occasions, the gods and goddesses, and muses, as auxiliaries. Still, when themes are given on which these useful personages cannot be brought to their assistance, and on which, from their oddity, they could not be prepared, they sometimes hit off very happily-turned verses. I gave 'a cat,' as a subject one night to a Roman improvisatrice,* who instantly composed some very pretty lines upon it; and 'a pen,' upon another occasion, called forth a still more ingenious poem from a gentleman.

By far the most interesting performance of the kind is, when two sing together, or rather against each other, in alternate stanzas; something like the contests in Virgil's Eclogues, or the trials of skill between ancient bards. The improvisatori, fired by each other's strains, by rivalry, and emulation, pour out their strophe and antistrophe, with a degree of increasing fervour and animation, that carries away their audience, as well as themselves.

Of the improvisatori of Rome itself, Signore Bionde is, in my opinion, by far the first, and I believe he is almost a solitary example of the published poems of an improvisatore being received with éclat. He, too, with the exception of Signore Sgricci, is the most calm in his action, the most free from those violent contortions or distortions which, whether the effect of natural agitation or affected passion, are peculiarly unpleasant to witness. These, indeed, I have invariably observed to be strongest in an inverse ratio to the goodness of the performer; and Sgricci, who confessedly stands at the head of the race, is wholly free from them.

A young Neapolitan improvisatrice, Rosa Taddei, has lately excited great interest at Rome; she is only nineteen, not handsome, but with a countenance full of expression, intelligence, and sensibility. That she is endowed with great natural genius, it would be vain to deny; and though very unequal, her compositions are sometimes lighted up with bursts of beauty, that seem really the effect of inspiration;

* A lady of remarkable talent, who, from diffidence, never would attempt to perform, except in a small circle of her own friends. She is since dead.

but it is almost painful to see her, from the agitation under which she labours, and the violent physical effort which every line seems to cost her. She is the daughter of a comedian, and has enjoyed no advantage of education; yet her manners have that natural elegance which results from a mind of genius and sensibility. She is now studying Latin, that universal and rational foundation for a good education here, and is making rapid advances in knowledge in history. With the Italian poets she is already conversant.

I never pitied any one more than this poor girl, at two or three sittings of the *accademie*. These sapient institutions are confraternities of male and female poets, who elect and eulogize, and stun each other with their own lackadaisical sonnets, elegies, and pastorals. There are two grand *accademie* in Rome, the Tiburina, which is quite of modern date, and the Arcadia, which is the ancient parent of the whole, and has planted its colonies in every city of Italy: for the Arcadians,—these enraptured swains, who so unweariedly extol the pleasures of rural simplicity and pastoral innocence, will be sought in vain among peaceful plains or secluded hamlets, or anywhere, except among the din of populous towns. Every member, on admission, becomes a shepherd, and takes some pastoral name, and receives a grant of some fanciful pastoral estate in the happy regions of Arcadia, where he is supposed to feed his harmless sheep. This pastoral brotherhood holds its meetings in a large hall, adorned with portraits of some of the most famous worthies among its deceased members; among whom, Sir Isaac Newton, and several other great philosophers of our country, had the *honour* to be included. Once a-month,—moved I presume by the influence of the moon,—they assemble to disburden their minds, and rills of nonsense meander from every mouth. I was once seduced into one of these assemblages, and sustained the infliction of the incessant recitation of the most wretched rhymes during three mortal hours. Nothing could be much more ridiculous than to hear an Arcadian, in the shape of a huge, clumsy, ungainly-looking man, in dirty boots, and a great coat, called upon by some such absurd name as 'Il Pastor Corydone,' and then to see

him get up and begin to repeat some silly ditty about his sheep, or to bewail himself on the cruelty of his *Fillide*. The natural effect ensued, and one of these plaintive pastorals was interrupted by the loud snores of a fat Arcadian swain. They convened an extraordinary sitting the other night, in honour of Rosa Taddei, the fair improvisatrice, whom, of course, they have made a shepherdess. She was handed into the crowded sala, which on this occasion presented not its usual beggarly account of empty benches, but boasted of cardinals, dukes, and duchesses, foreign ambassadors,—and Canova, who accompanied us. One after another they began addressing her, in long Latin and Italian pastorals, and other rigmaroles, in which they made her out to be a star come down from heaven; an amaranthine flower transplanted to earth; the soul of a seraph, usually employed in singing in heaven, now come down to perform in this nether world: they said Corilla was a dunce to her; even Sappho herself was undone: she was a tenth Muse, and beat the other nine all to nothing,—had been nursed upon Olympus, and was Apollo's prime favourite, &c. &c.

She is really modest, and without any affectation it was easy to see she was extremely discomposed with the absurd hyperboles that were mercilessly addressed to her. After this weary performance, her own began. The parting of Titus and Berenice,—the address of Moses to the Israelites on the passage of the Red Sea (some passages very fine),—the Fall of Man,—Adam and Eve expelled from Paradise,—the Death of Arria,—the Parting of Venus and Adonis (by far the best),—the Battle of Constantine and Maxentius (not suited to her, and very poor), and Calliope at the Tomb of Homer,—a favourite Italian mode of verse-making, in which the supposed visitor, whether muse or man, pours forth an appropriate strain of lamentation; these were some of the principal subjects on which she sang, with various, but sometimes distinguished success. She is almost the only performer in whom I have ever seen much hesitation. She was frequently obliged to repeat the last line twice, and even thrice. I believe I forgot to tell you that few improvisatori, except Sgricci, ever perform without music, and none ever accompany themselves. They choose

a simple, but marked measure, suited to the rhythm they are going to compose in, which is played on the pianoforte by another person; and the cadence, and strong intonation in which they recite, is *nearly* singing.

The utility of the music is not so much to conceal any irregularity in the metre, as to give a certain inspiration to the performer,—to kindle a certain feeling of enthusiasm, which it is vain to describe, but which all who are susceptible of the power of music or poesy must have felt. The improvisatori seem to have the power, by certain associations, of calling up at will those trains of feeling under which alone they can pour forth the unpremeditated strains of lyric song. Several of the Italian improvisatrice, in their raised and inspired moods, pouring forth their unpremeditated strains,—exactly as if possessed,—remind me of all I have heard of the Sibyls of old, who, I believe, were nothing more than improvisatrice, except that they spoke, and were heard, under the belief of their oracular divine mission.

LETTER LXXXIV.

POETRY, LITERATURE, AND SCIENCE.

THERE are few places in which the Latin classics are more generally studied, or understood, than at Rome, nor are the great Italian poets less duly appreciated. There is not a line of Dante, or Tasso, or Petrarch, that is not diligently conned. Yet, in spite of all this studying of poets, there is no poetry. Tides of verse are poured forth in an unceasing flow, but nothing remains. They all pass into the quiet stream of oblivion.

Of all the innumerable living poets of Rome, there is not one whose works I ever yet could read to an end; perhaps, therefore, I am not competent to give an opinion upon their merits; and posterity, I suspect, will not have the means of deciding upon them. It certainly proves a disinterested love of the Muses, that there should be so many of their votaries in a country where a poet must be poor, and where indeed no author can easily make any money; but these capricious ladies do by no means seem to respond to the passion entertained for them, or bless with their favours their importunate Roman suitors.

If I am not struck with the charms of their verse, I am scarcely more captivated with their prose. Its tedious formality, its unvaried dulness, and its wearisome verbosity, are inconceivable, except to those who have laboured at it; and these qualities, with few exceptions, are characteristic alike of the old and new writers. At least, I can truly say that, during the two years that have elapsed since I first came to Rome, not a work has passed the press to which their own expressive '*Seccatura!*' does not apply. Why they always think it necessary to involve their meaning, when they have

any, in such a cloud of words, is more than I can pretend to explain. Neither do I understand how it happens, that men who in conversation are so clever and entertaining, should in their writings be so tedious and stupid.

These observations, in some measure, apply not to Rome only, but to the whole of Italy. At the same time, wide is the difference at present between the south and the north of this country. The scale of intellectual gradation may be said to rise regularly with the degrees of latitude, from Naples to Milan. It is there you must look for literature and science. It is there, too, that the last poets of Italy flourished. Perhaps I ought to speak in the present tense, for Pindemonte is still alive, and it would be ungrateful to pass over one who sang the praise of the beauty, the virtue, and the mental charms and graces of my countrywomen, in strains that ought to live. Passerone's poems, too, possess great merit; but none, in my opinion, are equal to Parini, the Pope of Italy, whose admirable *Giornati*, in its witty strain of satire, may even court a comparison with the Rape of the Lock.

Like Pope, too, he was deformed, and even from childhood a cripple; and like Burns, this elegant satirist, the idol and the scourge of drawing-rooms, and the bugbear of a court, raised himself from the station of a ploughman, and struggled with poverty and with hardship, cruelly aggravated by a long life of sickness and suffering. He wrote many admirable pieces, but *La Giornata* is by far the best.*

With this solitary exception,—and we can scarcely call that a poem of the day, which has been read nearly half a century,—the most popular modern poems in Italy are, at present, translations from the English; and Ossian and The Seasons are scarcely less admired in the vales of Italy than among their native Caledonian mountains. Poetic genius, indeed, seems to have taken its flight to our favoured island, and while the names and the lays of Byron, Campbell, Scott, Moore, Crabbe, Wordsworth, &c. &c., resound beneath our gloomy skies, none have caught the ear of Fame, in the

* It is divided into four parts, 'Il Mattino, il Meriggio, il Vespro, e la Notte;' and gives an exquisite satirical picture of the life of an Italian fashionable.

country which would seem to be the native land, and to boast the native language of song.

The modern bards of England surpass those of Italy as much as the immortal poets of Italy's better days excel all other nations. I scarcely know how to name another modern Italian poet,—Ugo Foscolo's prose is better than his verse, and neither are of pre-eminent merit.

Casti is dead; and his *Animali Parlanti*, though it had all the advantages of being prohibited, first by Bonaparte, and next by the existing government, is, in my humble opinion, more talked of than read, more praised than admired, and more admired than it deserves. The strain of bitter sarcasm which runs through it, shows quite as much malignity as wit; and who can read with patience the colloquies of lions and other beasts, through three long volumes?

No work of modern days boasts any of the fire of fancy—the bright creations or inspired spirit of true poetry; and, sickened with the dull, maudlin common-place that is thrust upon one in every circle, one is tempted to ask one's self if this is really the country that produced an Ariosto? But it *did* produce Ariosto, and that is atonement sufficient. One delightful flight of his imagination is worth all that Italy has to boast in latter days.

His inexhaustible beauties and magic creations, that master both the fancy and the heart, have to me a witchery beyond all that the strains, even of my native language, ever possessed. But it is not the present fashion among the critics, who judge from rule, and do not venture to trust to the true unbiassed voice of native taste and feeling, to extol Ariosto,—I mean as compared to Dante, and Petrarch, and Tasso, and all these more regularly marching poets. How little must they have ever felt his enchantment!

But it is excess of presumption in me to oppose their decision on such a subject, and Ariosto alone can be my excuse.

The Italian drama, I have already observed, is poor indeed, compared to ours. Poets out of number have written plays, but none of them have risen to any name or reputation, either in or out of Italy, excepting Alfieri and Goldoni, of whose works you have perhaps already dis-

covered that I am not so enthusiastic an admirer as many of my countrymen.

Italian literature has one great desideratum, that of novels. You will stare and tell me of Boccaccio, and all his tribe of imitators; but, not to mention their licentiousness, their *novelli* are not what we call novels. This will be sufficiently evident without reading them (which I by no means counsel you to do), from their size. When a hundred and one tales go to the making up of an octavo volume, it is plain they must be of a different species. These are, perhaps, peculiar to Italy; but Italy has nothing to put in competition with the incomparable Don Quixote and Gil Blas, of Spain and France; and with these exceptions, England stands unrivalled in this delightful species of composition, to which every passing year now adds new and imperishable treasures.

The style and matter of the periodical publications, more especially of the critical journals of Italy, are, beyond all comparison, beneath those of England, and are as remarkable for their unwearied dulness and verbosity, as ours for their wit and ability. The restrictions on the freedom of the press, are doubtless, in a great measure, the cause of this. So curbed, English journals could scarcely have been much better.

If literature is not in a very flourishing condition at Rome, science is still less prosperous. It has ever been the policy of the Papal government, from the days of Galileo to the present time, to discourage, as much as possible, *the search after truth*. A spirit of inquiry, or of philosophical investigation, is that which it most deprecates. Consequently, the few who have any glimmerings of light upon such subjects, are glad to hide their talent in a napkin, as if it were a crime. It is, indeed, true that the study of antiquities is now unprohibited; that there is no longer any Paul II. to seize upon a whole academy of antiquaries, throw them chained into dungeons, and put them to the torture, as conspirators and heretics; and that the name of academy may now be pronounced, either in jest or earnest, without being guilty of heresy.* Abundant use has been

* Paulus tamen hæreticos eos pronunciavit qui nomen Academiæ, vel

made of this privilege: academies of all kinds and sorts have been formed; books without end have been written, and still accumulated discussions daily appear on the hundred-times-discussed brick walls and other unintelligible fragments of the antiquities of Rome.—But the antiquities of Nature are left unexplored. This term may be allowed me, for the lavas of the Campagna of Rome, which may be seen at the Capo di Bove (the tomb of Cecilia Metella), are considered by geologists to be even of higher antiquity than those which are found below the foundations of the houses, and with which the streets are paved at Herculaneum and Pompeii, and which, therefore, must have been deposited many ages before the foundation of those cities; and when we reflect, that from the earliest records of time, not even tradition had told of volcanic eruption here, we are startled at the visible trace of these subterranean fires, which we know have been extinguished at least during three thousand years, and are compelled to ascribe the devastating torrents we behold, to a period almost coeval with the birth of time.*

The marine shells (bivalves) which are found in immense number, imbedded in clay, on the summit of Monte Mario,† twenty miles from the coast, and also on the top of the Apennines, afford a curious proof that the ocean has had its changes as well as the land, and that Italy has been inundated with torrents of water as well as of fire.

These shells, which are in perfect preservation, are, generally at Rome, referred to the time of the deluge; and however that may be, when we think of the thousands of years

serio vel joco, deinceps commemorarent.—Vide 'Lives of the Popes,' by Platina (in Paulo II.), or P. L. Guingéné (tom. iii. chap. 21), 'Histoire Littéraire d'Italie,' where I met with this curious statement:—The Pope had seized Pomponius Lætus, and his whole Academy of antiquaries,—Platina himself among the rest,—and after confining them in dungeons and chains for nearly two years, and torturing them until one died in the rack, he was compelled virtually to acknowledge their innocence, by his inability to produce a single proof of their guilt, and at length liberated them, enacting the above-mentioned sapient law.

* The lavas of the Capo di Bove consist of eighteen different beds, or strata, forming the most complete and instructive series of volcanic substances known. They contain leucite, augite, zeolite, and nephelin, besides a great variety of undescribed substances.

† A steep hill two miles from Rome.

they have unquestionably lain there, they may, as well as the lavas, safely lay claim to the title I have given them of natural antiquities.

But the wide field of research which is open to the naturalist in the vicinity of Rome, is little regarded, except by a few passing strangers.

I am no botanist, but it is impossible for the eye of a florist, or of a lover of nature, not to be struck with the variety and prodigality of beauty which paint the hills, the woods, and the plains around Rome, when the breath of spring wakes the vegetable creation into life. Fields covered over with patches of purple anemones; others blue with hyacinths; others yellow with a pretty species of ranunculus; others white with little bulbous-rooted plants, like crocuses. The cliffs and rocky hills abound in shrubs similar to the laburnum, but of a different species, and with Daphnes, Passerinas, and Euphorbiums; the woods with Primulas, Verbascums, and Cyclamens. The common daisy is generally found twice as large as in our cottage gardens, and its crimson tips are infinitely more brilliant. I am assured by one of our first English botanists, that the botanical riches of this country, particularly in the month of March, and about Albano, La Riccia, and Velletri, are scarcely to be equalled in Europe; and that, excepting the plain of Grenada, there is no other equal to the Campagna of Rome; indeed, the fine luxuriant leaves of the plants that cover it, as well as the rich tints of the flowers, seem to afford the strongest proof of the excellent quality of the soil.

"I wish," said a botanist to me one day, carried away by his enthusiasm for his favourite pursuit,—"I wish I could give you any idea of the scenes presented every day to a botanical eye in Italy. Nothing can exceed the pleasure and delight which they afford; and whatever may be the superior beauty of tropical climates, there is one charm attached to the Italian plants, of which they can never be deprived—I mean that many of them are mentioned by Virgil."

So great is the variety of plants that have rooted themselves upon the ancient walls of the Colosseum alone, that

Sebastiani, the professor of botany at Rome, published a work in quarto, entitled 'Flora Colisea,' in which he describes 260 different kinds that are found there. But I am informed this does not nearly include the whole, which, with the various sorts of mosses and lichens, amount to upwards of 300 species. Nearly one quarter of these are papilionaceous; and there are three sorts of hyacinths (one very beautiful) peculiar to the vicinity of Rome. The remainder of the plants of the Colosseum are chiefly such as are found on old walls in the south of Europe.

At Rome, however, the botanical garden is scarcely worth a visit. The science seems fallen into total neglect, and the professorship is a sinecure. At Pisa and Padua the plants are arranged according to the system of Tournefort, not of Linnæus. The gardens in both places are very well kept, and filled with a great variety of beautiful plants; so also is the botanical garden at Naples. Many of the finest have been described, and beautifully portrayed by Dr. Tenore, in his superb work, the 'Flora Neapolitana.' But with this exception, nothing can be more inert than the spirit of science at Naples, although one would suppose that the wonderful phenomena of Nature in its vicinity would rouse the observation and inquiry, even of the most obtuse minds. In the north of Italy, on the contrary, amidst its flat, unvaried, alluvial plains, science and philosophy have of late made rapid advances, and almost all the scientific men that Italy can boast, are to be found there, particularly at Bologna and Milan. Many other cities, no doubt, can boast men of science and erudition; but Milan, upon the whole, struck me as being the metropolis of literary talent, as Rome is of art. Schools, on the Lancasterian plan, have lately been established there, under the direction of Count Gonfalonieri,—a decisive sign of the active spirit of improvement which distinguishes this enlightened city.

But Milan is not my theme, nor Modena,—though I must stop to observe that the celebrated Amici, a native of that place, has brought the microscope to a wonderful degree of perfection, and has completely succeeded in conquering the difficulty of increasing the magnifying power, without diminishing the light; from which defect in the old micro-

scope, the more the object was magnified, the more confused it became, and it was impossible to obtain a perfect image. In the best of this kind, the light was only 0·0025, but in his it is as 1·00; and the magnifying power, which in them never exceeded 150 times, in his may be increased to 1000 times: while the object, instead of being, as formerly, confused and indistinct, is perfectly clear and defined.

This is effected by the rays of light from a bright lamp being concentrated by a concave mirror, placed laterally to the tube, and thrown on the object; by means of another concave mirror, of an elliptical form, placed at the extremity of the tube, and by a small plane mirror at right angles between them, a magnified and distinct image of the object is formed in the focus, and is viewed through a magnifying lens, of any degree of power.

At Rome, however, there are few who are scientific, or who have even any interest in science. Nor is there a single museum of natural history, public or private, worth looking at.

LETTER LXXXV.

CHILDBIRTH—MARRIAGES AND FUNERALS—DANCING—GAMES—FLATS, AND COMMON STAIRS—MEAT—COOKERY—FOOD FOR THE COMMON PEOPLE, &c.

YOU ask me so many questions, inquire so much about births, marriages, burials, balls, houses, games, meat, cookery, Michael Angelo, wild boars, and singing-birds, that I scarcely know how or where to begin. Some of these questions I believe I have already anticipated, and the rest I shall try to answer as laconically as possible.

It is certainly true that women seem to suffer less in childbirth in Italy—and I believe in all warm climates, where the muscles are more relaxed—than in England, or any colder country; but they by no means look upon it as a mere joke, nor is there anything entertaining in it,—for they not unfrequently die. Women of fortune scarcely ever nurse their children, and babies of all degrees are most cruelly cased up in swaddling-clothes. As for marriages, you will be shocked to hear that there is a great proportion of the year in which people cannot marry at all. The forbidden seasons are from the beginning of Advent till the seventh day of the new year; and from the beginning of Lent till the end of Easter. Besides these stated interregnums, the people voluntarily refrain from marrying on Friday,—a day which, on account of the Crucifixion, has been esteemed unlucky in all Christian countries.

The marriage ceremony, I think, differs very little from that of the Church of England, except in a few signs of the cross and sprinklings of holy water; and people are dressed very fine to look happy, and cry a great deal to look miserable; and make great dinners, which nobody can eat, and

receive the congratulations of their friends, which nobody can like,—just as they do in England.

Burials, however, are conducted after a very different fashion. In no part of Italy, or any other country, have I seen such long and lugubrious funeral processions as in Rome. This custom, however, is confined to the wealthy citizens, for the lower orders, of course, cannot afford it, and the nobility, possibly for the same reason, do not practise it. But when a rich shopkeeper or any of his family dies, Rome is filled with the funeral train. The corpse, dressed out in gay and splendid attire, exactly as if going to a ball, with the cheeks painted, is carried at the close of evening through the streets on an open bier, attended by every description of mourners that can be collected, and invariably followed by hired deputations of friars from at least three or four different convents, clad in the long penitential garb that covers even the head, with holes cut for the eyes, chanting the slow and solemn service for the dead. These dismal sounds,—the long funeral procession that sometimes fills the Corso as far as the eye can reach, seen by the lurid glare of the immense wax tapers that are borne by the mourners, and, more than all, the shocking sight of the corpse itself, exposed to view, and dressed up, as if in mockery, with the unseemly decorations of life and vanity, have an effect upon most people's nerves that is far from agreeable.

In every respect,—in the open bier, the corpse clad in the garments of life,* the painted face, the flaming torches,† the chanted hymns, the hired mourners,‡ the long procession,—

* Livy (lib. xxxiv.) says that the dead were clothed in the robes of their office,—exactly as an officer of the *Guarda Nobile* is now carried in his bier, in his full-dress uniform, and a Cardinal laid out in his richest vestments. Juvenal (Sat. 3, l. 171) observes, that great part of the people of Italy who never wore the toga when alive, were dressed in it when dead.

† Persius, Sat. 3, l. 103. Æn. lib. ii. v. 142, and lib. ii. v. 144.

"——— Lucet via longo
Ordine flammarum."

‡ The *Præficæ*, or hired mourners, who, however, were women, used to chant the funeral song. The Romans had also players and buffoons

in all the pomp and circumstance,—these modern funerals remind us of the funerals of the ancient Romans;—and it is curious to see a similitude in such minutiæ after the lapse of two thousand years, and a change of religion and manners so complete.

The *bourgeois* funeral processions are always on foot, for carriages at interments are a privilege confined to the nobility, whose funerals are sometimes almost as indecent from the want of proper respect, as those of the plebeians from the superabundance of parade. In these noble funerals the body is enclosed, as it should be, in a coffin; but this coffin, instead of being carried in a hearse, or on a bier, is put into a coach, and being much too long for the vehicle, one end of it sticks out at one of the windows, while four priests, who occupy the four corners, chant the service as fast as ever they can; the lighted tapers they bear in their hand, twinkling about and dropping as they go. A few livery servants, also bearing lights, precede the coach on foot; and this is all! No sorrowing friends or relations attend, to their last home, the remains of one whom they were bound to love and honour. At least in all the funerals I have seen, including those of members of some of the most ancient and opulent families of Italy,—the Doria, the Colonna, and the Fiano,—they were conducted in this manner. The body, whether of prince or plebeian, always lies all night in the church in which it is to be interred, and is consigned to the vault the following morning.

When any member of a noble Roman family dies, it is customary to send round billets to all the nobility with whom he had the slightest acquaintance, to request them to pray for the soul of the deceased.

We saw the funeral of a Cardinal the other day. He was laid out on a sort of large state-bed, in a church, dressed in his richest robes of state, with diamond buckles in his shoes, and his face painted so very like life, that, during the whole ceremony, we could not help expecting to see him get up every moment. After a very long and peculiar burial-service,—for Cardinals have one of their

to perform their antics before the bier; for plays were originally introduced as religious ceremonies. Vide Letter XXVI.

own, the Pope, who had 'assisted,' as they call it, that is, he had sat still and heard it, at last got up, and having prayed, or seemed to pray, beside the bed, for the Cardinal's soul, he walked twice round it, sprinkling it with holy water,* throwing up clouds of incense, and so the ceremony ended. The Pope and the Cardinal were each put into their respective coaches. The Pope went to his present home to eat his dinner, the Cardinal to his long home, not to eat, but to be eaten.

I since overheard, to my great amazement, an old woman lament herself that her son, who was very ill, had not died that day. On enquiry, she told me that a Cardinal always carries up with him to heaven all those who die between the period of his death and burial. This accounts for an old painting I once saw on the mildewed wall of an Italian church, representing a Cardinal in the act of flying upwards, with a number of people hanging to his skirts—which must be a very convenient mode of being smuggled into heaven.

Rome, I think, is the only great city of Italy in which the abominable practice of burying exclusively in churches is persisted in. At Naples, and some other places, they do occasionally inter the great in them; but still they have the Campo Santo for the mass of the people. At Florence, and most of the towns in Tuscany, there is a large burying-ground without the city; but of all cemeteries I have ever seen, that at Bologna pleased me the most. It was formerly a Certosa convent: the cloister contains the tombs of the rich; the central enclosure, the graves of the poor. It is beautifully kept, and, without exception, the cleanest place in Italy.

From burials to balls. What can I tell you of them? Balls are much the same all the world over: People put on gay dresses and faces, and smiles and civility; outwardly everybody is alike, but inwardly, what different feelings agitate every heart! It would be curious to analyse what degrees of pleasure, pride, anger, hatred, malice, envy, mortification, vanity, and a thousand other opposing passions,

* The ancient Romans besprinkled the mourners at funerals with lustral or holy water three times, but not, I believe, the dead body.—Æn. lib. vii.

go to the making up of every ball, what schemes are in people's heads, and what thoughts in their hearts! But I presume you do not want the *morale* of it, only the outward show. All the difference, then, that I can discover between a ball here, and a ball at home, is, that the Italian ladies have finer jewels, and the English ladies prettier faces; that the Italian gentlemen are more easily attracted, and the English gentlemen better worth attracting; that here, people eat more ice, and no supper; and dance more quadrilles, and no country dances.* They waltz, too, at all their balls, but not remarkably well. The Germans and Swedes surpass the rest of the world in the waltz. The Neapolitans, I thought, almost excelled the French themselves in quadrille dancing. There was no exertion, no effort, no showing off. It was the most easy and natural, yet smooth and graceful motion in the world.

I have never seen the *Tarantella*, that extraordinary dance that is supposed to be involuntarily caused by the bite of the tarantula, and to work its cure; but it may be doubted whether this dance be really independent of volition or not; for as the tarantula is found all over Italy, it is probable that it sometimes bites people in other places; yet it is only at Naples that they are seized with this dance: and even there, it is not to be supposed that it always refrains from putting its fangs into the bodies of the higher orders; yet none of them are ever attacked with it.

The lower class of Romans, I think I told you, are no great dancers: except at the conclusion of the vintage, when they come into Rome like a set of Bacchanals, dancing, leaping, bearing torches, and playing on musical instruments; and at the Bacchanalian sports which ensue, at that period, on Monte Testaccio, little dancing goes forward.

The *Saltarello*, as its name implies, is a dance of great action, and is, for the most part, confined to the Trasteverini. I have already mentioned the *Morrà*, and the *Ruzzica*, and some other games, chiefly practised amongst them, which seem to be of ancient Roman origin. There is also the *Pallone*, a game at ball, common, I believe, throughout

* The old English dance was not then (1820) exploded in England.

Italy, and played by two parties, who throw the *pallone*, or great leathern ball, from one to another, by means of the *bracciale*, a wooden instrument covered with knobs, in which they thrust their arms. It seems to be very similar to the game of ball, which the Roman philosophers of old used to practise by way of exercise and amusement. There is also a game of foot-ball among the modern Italians, called *Calcio*, which I have never seen.

The people here live in flats, and have a common stair, as in Edinburgh; a plan by no means confined to that much vilified city, or even to this—but common throughout France, Italy, Spain, and Portugal. Though by no means conducive to cleanliness or comfort, it is highly favourable to grandeur of appearance, and architectural effect: for by this means the houses are built upon so much larger a scale, that their exterior is susceptible of fine design and ornament; and even when plain, or in bad taste, it is scarcely possible they should not have a more noble air than the mean, paltry, little rows of houses in England and Holland, where everybody must have one of his own. It is the office of a mason to build these rows of plain walls with holes for doors and windows in them, that constitute the houses in English towns; but it is that of the architect to erect them on the Continent.

There is one peculiarity of the flats of Rome, which (thank Heaven!) cannot be found in Edinburgh. As you go up a common stair here, you observe a square grating in every door. Knock at one of them—somebody comes, uncloses ths wooden shutter that covers it, and eyes you suspiciously through the bars before he ventures to open it —and this at noonday! Wherever you live in Rome, you must be content to live on a common stair. If your abode be a palace, it will be the same thing. The most you can hope for is a *primo* or *secondo piano* to yourself. Lodgings for single gentlemen, or small families, abound; upon a larger scale, it is more difficult to find accommodation. On the whole, however, they are tolerably commodious, and by no means exorbitant. Living is very good throughout Italy, in large towns; miserably bad in the country. For instance, you are sure to find plenty of milk and butter in a city, but

none amidst fields and farm-houses. Rome is well supplied with good cow's milk and cream, and butter. Asses, too, are brought to your door morning and evening, to be milked if you choose it,—a great advantage to invalids; but cows do not perambulate the streets here, as at Naples, for that purpose, with bells to their necks.* Butcher-meat at Rome is plentiful, but not cheap. The price is kept up by the absurd interference of Government. Beef is good, but, by a curious prejudice, it is very little used at the tables of the higher orders, being considered a coarse, gross kind of food, only fit for the vulgar—and the English. Veal is accounted a delicacy; it is dear, and what in England would be called bad. Mutton is not good here, nor in any part of Italy. Pork is thought very fine. Kid is much used, and is sweet and delicate, but as inferior to lamb, as goat's flesh is to mutton. The fish is not remarkably good. Game is abundant, cheap, and excellent. Geese are not eaten at all. Pigeons are large, strong-flavoured, and not unlike ducks. In fact, neither meat nor poultry are so good in any part of the Continent as in England. The French cooks certainly excel ours—perhaps because the meat is worse; just as Scotland produces the best gardeners, having the worst soil and climate. Italian cookery, however, in large towns, is reasonably good. In country inns, you must expect to be poisoned with oil and garlic, in spite of all your precautionary prohibitions against *olio* and *aglio*;† but this is of less consequence, because, in these places, there is seldom anything to cook.

At Rome, strangers who live in private lodgings, generally have dinners sent home to them from a *trattoria* in the Piazza di Spagna. The dishes are all conveyed in a large basket, lined with tin, with a little stove or iron heater inside; so that they are quite hot, and very good—but certainly not cheap, for they are very scanty in quantity, and

* When at Naples, I was astonished to find that the milk, which was drawn from the cow at the door, was so thin and blue. At last it was discovered that the milkman had contrived to adulterate it with water, which he carried in a bladder under his cloak, although constantly watched by our servant.

† Oil and garlick.

cost ten pauls, or about five shillings, per head, without wine, bread, or dessert.

Some English families, whose lodgings had the rare appendage of a kitchen, tried the plan of having dinner dressed at home, but their cooks cheated them so unmercifully, that they were nearly ruined; they then made a contract with them, and were nearly starved.

But English habits and accommodations must necessarily spread rapidly throughout Italy, with the unceasing torrent of English travellers and English wealth which pours into it. The influx of strangers, indeed, into this country is astonishing, but they are all from the north of Europe. No Spaniards or Portuguese, and very few French, are to be seen. But Germans, Swedes, Poles, Russians, and more especially English, descend from the Alps in such numbers, that Rome seems in danger of another invasion of the Goths. Americans too—men from a world unknown to the Romans—may be seen gazing at the ruined monuments of their power and grandeur.

"Quæ tam sepositа est, quæ gens tam barbara, Cæsar,
Ex qua spectator non sit in urbe tuâ?"*

The lower orders certainly live upon very little in Italy. It is only at Naples that macaroni is the food of the people. At Rome, and in most parts of Italy, *polenta*, a sort of pudding made of Indian corn, is the principal article of subsistence: probably the same as the *polenta* of the ancients.† This is varied with the luscious pods of the caruba tree;‡ the almond-tasted kernels in the cones of the spreading pine-tree; different sorts of fruits, particularly roasted chesnuts, which, in the mountainous parts of the country, the people almost live upon; and various kinds of beans, lupins, and lentils. Of course, in all places they eat bread—when they can get it; and cheese, sausages, &c., are universally liked. Indeed, these, with salt-fish (*baccalà*) and soup (*minestra*), made chiefly of boiled meat or macaroni and water, and mixed with a little grated cheese, are

* Martial.

† Pliny, Hist. Nat. lib. xviii. cap. 7.

‡ According to tradition, the tree upon which Judas hanged himself.

their luxuries. But the thin, sour, ordinary wine of the country, is indispensable to them; and, truth to say, in the heat of summer, it is far from being an unpleasant beverage. It is considered at its perfection in a year—'Vino d' un' anno' is proverbially good.

Sobriety is a national virtue here, as in most warm climates; and indeed no quantity of such wine can intoxicate; but the Italians, of all ranks, are fond of rosolio and other liqueurs, though they scarcely ever drink them to excess. The abstemious habits of the Italians render seasons of scarcity, when they do occur, peculiarly dreadful. In the consumption of a people who already live upon as little as will support human nature, no reduction can be made. Hence scarcity is synonymous with famine.

The common oaths in this country have such a classical sound that they do not offend your ears. The people swear by Bacchus, either 'per Bacco!'—'Corpo di Bacco!' or 'Cospetto!' (by the presence of Bacchus):—or else they swear by Nero, who stands them instead of the devil;—although they by no means refrain, like other Christians, from invoking, personally, that much-called-for personage.

It is the universal, and extremely disagreeable custom all over Italy, for the lower orders to kiss the hands of their superiors,—a custom, by the way, which seems to have come down from the ancients, for there are frequent allusions to it in the classics.*

The infatuation of the lower orders for the never-ceasing lotteries which go on here, is inconceivably pernicious to their industry and morals, and brings misery and ruin upon thousands. Too often the last necessary of life, taken from a starving family, is pawned at the *Monte di Pietà* to purchase a lottery-ticket. The scene at the drawing of the lotteries here, may be a study for the painter or the philosopher, but it is a painful sight for a man.

These *Monti di Pietà*,—these pawnbroking and banking concerns, which are instituted in every city of Italy, are said to carry on rather a lucrative traffic, though I understand

* I have met with several, but can only at this moment instance one:—Tacitus (Ann. lib. i. cap. 34) says the soldiers flocked round Germanicus, eager to kiss his hands on his return to the camp.

their proceedings are equitable, and their tendency charitable. They lend money on pledges, or on proper security, on established conditions, for a certain period, without interest; but at the expiration of the stipulated term, the pledge or security, if unredeemed, is forfeited, unless a fixed rate of interest be paid upon the loan.

Such an establishment, if conducted by a respectable company in England, might perhaps protect the property of the poor from the rapaciousness of unprincipled pawnbrokers, and the property of the rich from depredation, by shutting up one great channel for the disposal of stolen goods. If conducted with the same secrecy and honour as in Italy, many an unfortunate being might receive, upon equitable terms, timely aid, whose honest pride cannot brook the ignominy of an open application to a pawnbroker.

But to return to your queries. Of Michael Angelo you have heard, by this time, I am sure, more than enough. Of wild boars there are great abundance, but of singing-birds very few. The 'songsters of the grove' are generally eaten up; not that the Italians are quite so unmerciful to them as the French, who would make no scruple of baking "four-and-twenty nightingales all in a pie," if they could get them; but still they do occasionally make a classical dinner upon thrushes; or, in default of better, string a dozen cock-robins on one little spit.

The wild boars abound among the Sabine Hills and the wild country around them. The peasants shoot them, and bring them to market at Rome. Their flesh is firm, dark, high-flavoured, and delicious; as different as possible from pork, both in appearance and taste. Vegetables are the greatest desideratum at an Italian table. In towns they are scarce and far from good; in the country there are none. And this must arise from the indolence of the people; for in such a climate and soil as this, with good management, they might have the finest vegetables of all kinds, all the year round.

The indolence of the Italian character, indeed, is the feature that, from first to last, forces itself most strongly on the stranger's notice. No doubt this is in a great measure to be ascribed to the climate; but it also partly arises from

the government, the institutions, and above all—the religion of the country. Wherever the Roman Catholic religion is established, I have uniformly observed indolence, with its concomitants, dirt and beggary, to prevail; and the more Catholic is the place, the more do they abound. Spain and Portugal, and Italy and Ireland, might be quoted as examples; and in going from the Protestant to the Roman Catholic cantons of Switzerland, the change uniformly struck us.

There is another and more powerful cause in Italy for the indolence of the people,—the constitution of society. It is framed so as to hold every man in the situation in which he is born. There are barriers he can never pass. Wealth, even if he can get it, will not give him that for which it is most sought—respect and importance; and I must say, that if a man does become rich in Italy (a rare occurrence!), it is generally by knavery, by iniquity, by the most nefarious practices; not by honourable industry, integrity, and good conduct. That they might become rich by these means, I do not doubt; on the contrary, I think, in thus continually labouring to cheat others, they often cheat themselves, and that they would find "honesty the best policy," if they could be persuaded to try it; but it is certain that men in Italy do sometimes make large fortunes by practices that, in England, would lead them to the gallows.

In England everything is open to talent, merit, and enterprise: in Italy everything is closed. A man, by his own personal exertions, scarcely can expect to make himself other than he is. Thus the powerful stimulus of hope is taken off; and can we wonder at the paralysing effect?

LETTER LXXXVI.

ITALIAN SCULPTORS—CANOVA—THORWALDSEN—SCHADOW—MOSAICS AND CAMEOS—MODELS—WORKS IN THE PRECIOUS METALS, ETC.

ROME indisputably possesses both the first ancient and modern school of sculpture. The incomparable Museums of the Vatican, the Capitol, and the Villa Albani, have drawn around them those great artists whose genius far surpasses all that the world has seen since the days of Michael Angelo and John of Bologna, and, in the judgment of many, even soars above those celebrated masters.

The first of these, both in fame and merit, is Canova. To him the renovation of modern taste, which had fallen into the most woeful corruption through the tortuous labours of Bernini and his wretched imitators, must be attributed. He restored the study of the fine forms of Nature and of the Antique; and sought, in these true sources of beauty, for that purity of taste, and that chastened simplicity and grace, which can alone make the works of the artist live. He first had the merit of striking into the long-neglected path, and even if others should outstrip him in it, they must own him for their guide. In one great branch of the art, that of basso-rilievo, he is unquestionably surpassed by Thorwaldsen (of whose works I shall speak hereafter), but it is the branch in which Canova is remarkably deficient. I should say his bassi-rilievi are positively bad.

Canova was born at Passagno, a small village in the Venetian territory, of parents whose poverty disabled them from giving to the genius his earliest youth displayed, the usual cultivation or encouragement. But he resolutely struggled with every difficulty, and finally triumphed over his fate.

At the age of fourteen, having obtained the long-wished-for boon of a small piece of marble, he sculptured out of it two baskets of fruit, which are now on the staircase of the Palazzo Farsetti, at Venice.

The next year, when only fifteen, he executed Eurydice, his first statue, in a species of soft stone, called *pietra dolce*, found in the vicinity of Vicenza; and, three years after, Orpheus; both of which are in the Villa Falier, near Asolo, a town about fifteen miles from Treviso.

His first group in marble, that of Dædalus and Icarus, he finished at the age of twenty, and brought with him to Rome, where he vainly solicited the patronage of the Venetian ambassador and many of the great; but when almost reduced to despair, without money or friends, he became known to Sir William Hamilton, whose discernment immediately saw the genius of the young artist, and whose liberality furnished him with the means of prosecuting his studies, and of establishing himself as an artist in Rome. To this, his first patron, and to all his family, Canova has through life manifested the warmest gratitude.

Through Sir William Hamilton his merits became known to others; even the Venetian ambassador was shamed into some encouragement of his young countryman, and ordered the group of Theseus and the Minotaur. A few years after, Canova was employed to execute the tomb of Pope Ganganelli, in the Church of the SS. Apostoli at Rome. With these exceptions, all his early patrons were Englishmen. Amongst these were Lord Cawdor, Mr. Latouche, and Sir Henry Blundell, for the latter of whom the Psyche, one of the earliest and most beautiful of his works, was executed.

In the bewitching grace and softness of feminine beauty, and the playful innocence of childhood, Canova excels all others—and even himself; for in the heroic style he certainly does not soar so high. His heroes either border on effeminacy, like his Perseus; or fly into extravagance, like his Hercules. Yet, with all their faults, his works in this style are conceptions of true genius. The idea is bold and grand; but we feel that he has overshot his mark. He has

got out of Nature, in attempting to rise above it; and the eye that has been accustomed to the chaste design and correct forms of ancient art, must be hurt with their glaring defects.

Indeed, it is unreasonable to suppose that any one artist, of whatever powers, should excel in departments so opposite. One might as well expect that Michael Angelo, whose genius, by the way, is the very antipodes of that of Canova, should have produced *his* smiling Hebes, voluptuous Venuses, and dancing Nymphs; that Albani should have pourtrayed the gloomy anchorites and martyrdoms of Caravaggio and Spagnoletto; Salvator Rosa painted the warm sunshines of Cuyp; or Pindar written the epic poems of Homer; as that Canova, who can call forth at will the most bewitching forms of female beauty and grace, should excel in an Ajax or a Hercules.

Canova's sepulchral monuments, too, for the most part, seem to me to have a heaviness and want of interest. There is one, indeed, erected to the Marchesa di Santa Croce, if I mistake not, of uncommon merit; particularly the bent figure of the old man advancing to the tomb, contrasted with that of the child. But, with few exceptions, we feel these monuments have been a labour to his fancy, and they are rather a toil to us:—for whether Italy weeps over the tomb of Alfieri,—Rome writes on a tablet, —Padua's castellated head meditates over nothing,—or Religion looks clumsy on the tomb of Rezzonico,—we turn wearied from their contemplation, and from the expression of the unmeaning lisp of admiration which habit or politeness draws forth, to the bright and immortal creations of his genius,—to his Hebe, his Venus, his dancing Nymphs, his infant Loves, and his laughing Graces.

Of these, his Hebe,* which he has four times repeated with variations, is, perhaps, the most universally admired. I cannot, however, approve of the gold necklace with which the last is adorned; not even the sanction of antiquity can ever reconcile me to decorations so unsuited to sculpture. We know the practice of some of the greatest masters of

* Of all statues, Hebe is the rarest. I never saw it in ancient sculpture, and I believe it is only to be found upon one Grecian gem.

Greece may be adduced, not only for necklaces, and earrings, and ornaments of all kinds in gold and precious stones,—but for painted cheeks; and that the honour of being rouged was more particularly reserved for the statues of Jupiter.* Certainly the descriptions handed down to us of the famous colossal ivory-and-gold Jupiter Olympius with painted cheeks, and the equally celebrated ivory Pallas with gems set for eyes—do not seem to promise much beauty, even from the hands of Phidias. If, however, this painting of statues was introduced in the vain attempt to create a nearer approach to living nature, the objects of sculpture seem to have been strangely mistaken and debased. Most certainly they do not consist in the close imitation of life; for, in that case, a common raree-show of wax-work would exceed the finest sculpture of Phidias. Upon what principle this custom can be reconciled to true taste, I am at a loss to understand. To me it seems about as bad as the Gothic custom of investing painted heads with real crowns.

The Venus coming out of the Bath,† in all its fourfold repetitions, varies, in some points, from the original; and the last, destined for Lord Lansdowne, and perhaps the most beautiful of them all, is, in fact, a new statue.

But Canova's own favourite was the Venus Victorious, under which the beautified portrait of Napoleon's sister, the Princess Pauline, was represented; and this, I think I before told you, is withheld from view by its possessor.

Perhaps the most beautiful of all his works,—the Venus and Adonis,‡—was finished at the age of six-and-thirty. This exquisite group, in my opinion, far surpasses the Mars and Venus, executed for the Prince Regent, and which was intended to represent Peace and War—but it is not sufficiently chaste or severe for such a subject; the expression is too voluptuous,—a fault, by the way, with which the

* Cicero, lib. viii. Ep. 20. Winkelman, Hist. de l'Art, lib. i, cap. 2, sect. 2. Pliny also mentions that the statue of Jupiter Capitolinus was rouged on festivals.

† Originally done by Canova for the Gallery of Florence, when it was robbed of the Venus de Medicis, and now in the Palazzo Pitti.

‡ In the palace of the Marchese Berio, at Naples.

works of this great artist are sometimes chargeable. Yet it is a beautiful group, and if considered merely as Venus hanging on the enamoured God of War, the expression is appropriate and faultless. As yet, it has not advanced beyond the model, and there seems little prospect of its being soon finished. Three blocks of marble have already failed, after the labour was considerably advanced, owing to the blemishes in the heart of them, and the fourth is about to be tried.*

The beautiful figure of the Reclining Nymph, half-raising herself to listen to the lyre of the sweet little Love at her feet, is on the point of being despatched to the Prince Regent, to whom it was ceded by Lord Cawdor.

The group of the Graces, the beauty of which is the object of universal admiration here, is also destined for our country, and will adorn Woburn Abbey. Beautiful as it is, I own it struck me as being rather *maniéré*, especially in the attitude and face of the central figure, which is chargeable with somewhat of affectation, somewhat of studied opera-house airs and *put-on* sweetness of countenance. But as Zeuxis said of one of his own paintings, "It is easier to criticise than to imitate it;" and it is with reluctance I see any faults in a work which has rarely been equalled in modern art, and the progress of which I have long watched with unspeakable interest and delight. It is only a few days since I saw the finishing strokes given to it by the hand of Canova.

Perhaps you may have no very clear idea of the progress of a sculptor in his work; at least, I find that many of my countrymen, whom I have introduced to Canova's studio, had previously supposed that his custom was to fall upon a block of marble, and chisel away till he had made it into a statue. Forgive me for the improbable supposition that you should be in such an error; but let me explain, that a sculptor begins upon much more ductile materials than marble. He forms his model in clay, and this is generally (and ought to be always) entirely the work of his own hands; but before he begins, the statue is perfectly *ideato*—the visionary figure is before him.

* In 1818.

When finished, a cast is taken from it by his assistants, which is dotted over with black points at regular intervals to guide the workmen. From this model they begin to work, and having reduced the block of marble into form, and made it a rough-hewn statue, the sculptor himself resumes his labours. The exterior surface, as it were, is his to form and perfect, and the last finishing touches he generally gives by candle-light. It is afterwards polished with pumice stone.

This is the invariable process. Many are the delightful hours I have spent with Canova, both when he has been employed in modelling and chiselling; and few are the companions whose society will be enjoyed with such interest or remembered with such regret.

The warmth and kindness of his disposition, the noble principles and generous feelings of his mind, and the unpretending simplicity of his manners, give the highest charm to his exalted genius. By the friends that know him best, he will be the most beloved.

Canova has the avarice of fame, not of money. He devotes a great part of his fortune to the purposes of benevolence. With the title of Marchese, the Pope conferred upon Canova three thousand piastres per annum, the whole of which he dedicates to the support and encouragement of poor and deserving artists. But I should never be done, were I to recount one-half of the noble actions, the generous exertions, and the extensive charities of his life, which are as secretly and unostentatiously performed, as judiciously applied. He is now building a church in his native village, and has alienated the greater part of his own fortune for the support of charitable institutions.

It is not, I believe, generally known, that Canova is a painter as well as sculptor. He has pursued the sister art occasionally, for the amusement of his leisure hours, and many of his designs are truly beautiful.

The Colossal Horse (a noble animal), originally intended for Napoleon's equestrian statue, is about to be mounted by the figure of old King Ferdinand of Naples.

It must be a gratifying circumstance to England to know, that even when living under the immediate dominion of the

French, he modelled, for his own private pleasure, a tribute to the memory of Nelson.

He is at present occupied in modelling a statue of Washington for the United States. The hero is represented seated, but is not yet finished, so I must not speak of it; especially as I am at present the only person who has been honoured with a sight of it. I may add, that it promises to be worthy of the subject and the sculptor.

The seated statue of the Princess Esterhazy is full of grace and dignity, and worthy of ancient art. That of Maria Louisa, which, however, reminds us strongly of the seated Agrippina, is also very fine: I mean the copy, with an ideal head; for her own features are wholly inadmissible in sculpture. She would have done wisely to have been taken in a moment of affliction, her face buried in her handkerchief, or mantle.

The figure of the Penitent, or Magdalen, is most beautiful. It proves he could pourtray the touching image of youth in all the abandonment of settled sorrow, as beautifully as youth in all the buoyancy of sportive mirth.

But if I were to enumerate all Canova's masterpieces, and all his merits, I might write a volume.*

The rival of Canova is Thorwaldsen, a Danish artist, whose genius has already borne him through every obstacle, and far beyond every other competitor (Canova excepted) to the head of his art; whose statues must be ranked next to those of Canova; and whose bassi-rilievi surpass all that has been given to the world since the brightest era of Grecian art.

His greatest work, the Triumph of Alexander the Great, was ordered by Napoleon, for a frieze to ornament a chamber

* Since the publication of the earlier editions of this work, the world has been deprived of this celebrated and exemplary man, whose character presented a union of genius and of virtue, rarely equalled. All may be the judge of his works; but few can know, as I did, the noble qualities of his mind, the honour, the delicacy, the generosity of his spirit, and the warm overflowing affections which endeared him to the hearts of his friends. Some more able biographer will do justice to his worth, but I cannot withhold this humble tribute of heartfelt respect to the memory of one whom I have known so well, and mourned so truly.

of the Quirinal Palace (in which the plaster cast is now put up); but before it was sculptured, the career of the emperor was run; and the present government, with crippled resources, and an overpowering priesthood, could not afford to lavish money on a work of taste; so that Thorwaldsen was in despair of ever giving to his masterpiece the durability of marble; when, only a few days ago, the liberality of a private individual, Count Sommariva (an Italian nobleman), gave him the long-wished-for order.

Nothing can surpass many parts of this frieze. I may instance Alexander in his car of triumph; but, as a whole, it has, perhaps, been drawn into too great length; there is occasionally a paucity of subject, a want of variety, of action, and of figures of high interest, which give it an air of poverty. A flock of sheep, extended over a space of many feet, for example, is wearisome alike to the eye and to the mind. Modern artists, indeed, labour under an immeasurable disadvantage in having all their fine models in art, not in nature. They cannot, like the ancients, imitate the objects, the modes, the costumes, that are for ever in their eye, in all their happy accidental combinations; they must turn from life to inanimate marble, and coldly copy from it, in faint transcript, the ancient car, the classic pomp, the laurel crown, the heroic armour, the graceful flowing robes. What sort of figure would our coaches, our coats and neckcloths, our boots and spurs, or our military uniforms with cocked hat and feather, make in sculpture?

The constant exhibitions of the finest youthful forms, in the athletic games, and the liberty of designing their great men in the nude or heroic style, were amongst the many great advantages the ancients possessed over the moderns. Still, however, the female form, with its variable draperies, is almost as well adapted to statuary as ever; for though fashion has rendered its habitual attire totally unfit for sculpture, its flowing robes are so much more tractable than male costume, that they may be considered at the disposition of the artist; and accordingly we find that all the great artists of the present day have succeeded best in female figures.

The busts of some of my fair countrywomen, with their

hair dressed, according to their own express desire, in the extreme of the present stiff and unnatural French fashion, sometimes draw a smile, as they catch one's eye in the *studii* of Roman artists, beside the classic models of a Vestal or an Agrippina. The female busts of certain periods of the empire, however, will, at least, match them in the extravagance and ugliness of their well-wigged head-dresses. Independent of hair and fashion, however, the men of our country make far finer busts than the young ladies, whose small delicate features were never meant for marble.

The finest bust I have seen in Rome is that of Lord Byron, by Thorwaldsen; though perhaps it is to the subject rather than the execution that it owes its superior excellence. Certainly, neither Thorwaldsen nor Canova, in this branch of art, surpasses our own Chantrey.

Thorwaldsen's exquisite and poetic rilievo of Night has rarely been equalled in any age. The Forging of Achilles' Armour has often been taken by connoisseurs for one of the finest productions of ancient art, and many of his sepulchral bassi-rilievi are pre-eminently beautiful. One, in particular, to the memory of a German youth who fell in battle, struck me with peculiar admiration. His family are hanging over him in every attitude of deep and speechless woe; his brother bears in his hand the crown won by his valour; and the Genius of Life, bending over his inanimate form, seems to mourn the extinguished torch, whose brightness he has been compelled to quench.

Of his statues—the Adonis is one of the first, and most beautiful of his works. The Mars, though wonderfully fine, is, perhaps, scarcely equal to it. The Shepherd Boy, seated on a rock, is supremely beautiful—full of grace and expression. His Mercury, his Venus, and his Jason—the earliest of his works—are admirable; but I should never have finished were I to describe the one-half of the beautiful sculptures which I have gazed upon a thousand times with unwearied delight in Thorwaldsen's studio.

He is now employed in modelling a beautiful figure of Hope, the idea of which was, perhaps, suggested by the small mutilated statue among the Egina Marbles, though I do not fear contradiction in asserting that this is infinitely

finer; in passing through his mind, he has given the idea a beauty and originality that stamp it all his own.

She is represented, as in the original, bearing in her hand a budding pomegranate flower; she seems to see in fancy the time when its bloom shall fully expand, and its rich fruit be matured. I marvel that an image so lovely and natural did not more frequently suggest itself to the poet's fancy. It is to Greece, after all, that we owe everything of taste and imagination.

I feel that, in this imperfect sketch, I have done little justice to the merit of this truly great genius, who has come from the frozen shores of Iceland* to the land of arts, to astonish the natives of her brilliant clime, with works that might have done honour to her earlier days.

If those works were better known in our own country, they would not need my humble tribute of applause, to speak their excellence or swell his fame. But that must rapidly increase, and will be immortal. More competent judges may appreciate more highly and more justly his merits; but none can better know and estimate the sensitive modesty and sensibility, the warm generosity, and the rare and estimable virtues of his character.

The sculptor who ranked third in eminence at Rome, when this work was published, was Rodolph Schadow, a native of Prussia, an artist of fine genius, whose career of high early promise has since been cut short by a premature death.

By far the most beautiful of his works, amongst many extremely beautiful, was the *Filatrice*, a female figure of singular delicacy and grace, sitting and winding a golden thread upon a spindle. The greatest artists of antiquity might have been proud of this admirable production. Another of his works was almost equally admired, the little girl, just issuing from the bath, tying her sandal upon her slender foot, which recalled to mind the well-known statue in the Florentine gallery, in a similar attitude. Perhaps indeed in this, and in some others of his works, he approached rather too closely to individual models of

* The father of Thorwaldsen was an Icelander, who settled at Copenhagen.

Grecian art—for the general spirit can never be too closely preserved; but he was quite as close an imitator of the beauty as the forms of ancient sculpture, and I know not how higher praise can be given to any modern artist.

It is singular that Rodolph Schadow, and almost all the great modern sculptors, excelled in the female form; whilst the reverse of this remark applies to modern painters.

These three great names, Canova, Thorwaldsen, and Schadow, stood pre-eminent in fame among the crowd of artists of Rome, among whom many of our own countrymen —Gibson especially—were of distinguished merit. Another highly interesting artist was the Signora Teresa Benincampé, whose beautiful bust of Cæsina, and many of her other works, were universally admired.

In busts, however, Chantrey, I think, equalled, nay, excelled, all foreign artists, and had he enjoyed their inestimable advantages of living among the masterpieces of ancient sculpture, and drinking in their beauties at every glance and at every moment, I have no doubt he would have rivalled them in the higher departments of sculpture—even in the ideal. But before his genius was fully matured, it unfortunately met in England with an excess of patronage—far more detrimental than its deficiency. An immense demand for the unripened fruits of genius tends to force the quantity of produce, before the plant, by slow growth, with time and care, has reached its vigour. Thus a manufactory of busts and figures is produced, instead of the masterpieces of a sculptor.

But sculpture demands those means and opportunities of study and cultivation which England cannot afford. This, indeed, is the true school of art. If there be any taste or talent, it must develop itself here.

The painters were scarcely inferior in number to the sculptors of Rome, but infinitely so in excellence. Camuccini, who then ranked highest, and many others, are now dead: and amongst the whole tribe not one historical painter has risen to fame; nor has one great or even good landscape painter ever appeared in Italy.

It is wonderful, that, in a country where the soft lights, the harmonious tints, and the bright aërial hues of the sky,

shed enchantment over every object, and make every scene a picture, the artist can fail to excel, where he has only to copy nature. Yet through Italy, France, and the whole of the continent, we may search in vain for anything like excellence in landscape painting. To portrait painting, the same remark applies. There is not, in either branch of the art, an artist at present in the world to compare with our own.

The engravers of Rome have made themselves so justly celebrated by their works, that they do not require my feeble tribute of praise. Yet some of our engravers at home would not suffer by a comparison with any here. But it is invidious to quarrel about degrees of excellence, where all are so good.

In this, as in most other branches of art, we see that Rome is the nurse, rather than the mother of genius. It is her adopted children who form her glory.

There are many minor fine arts practised at Rome, which are wholly unknown in England. The most remarkable of them is the Mosaic Manufactory, upon which I believe I have touched before. It was about to be removed into a vacant Palazzo, which was, when I left Italy, preparing for its reception; but was then carried on in the palace of the Holy Office at Rome, from which the Inquisition was ousted by the French, and into which it was destined to be reinstated by the Papal government. Indeed, the papers and archives belonging to it were then conveyed back into some of the vacant chambers of this immense building.

The Inquisition at Rome has always been remarkable for its mildness; and, compared with the horrible and tyrannical iniquity of the same tribunal at Venice and Madrid, it deserves the epithet of lenient. Nothing, however, can alter its nature, or make a court, whose proceedings are secret, whose decision is absolute, whose information is derived from insidious spies, whose accusers are concealed, and unconfronted with the accused, whose judges are not accountable, and who can inflict imprisonment and torture to any extent on the unconvicted; nothing can make such an institution as this anything but an execrable and dia-

bolical engine of cruelty, injustice, and oppression, worthy of the invention of Lucifer himself.

But I have got into a passion, and into the Inquisition, instead of the Mosaic Manufactory. It is carried on under the direction and at the cost of government; and its fruits are theirs. The workmen are constantly employed in copying paintings for the altar-pieces of churches. I grieved to see such as Camuccini's, though one of his best, the Incredulity of St. Thomas, copying at this immense expense, when the works of the first masters are fast mouldering away on the walls of forgotten churches. They will soon be lost for ever; it is yet possible to render them imperishable by means of mosaic copies; and why is it not done?

The French, at Milan, set an example of this, by copying, in mosaic, the Last Supper of Leonardo da Vinci; although they signalized their bad taste by copying a bad copy of it. But it was their plan to do much for Milan, and nothing for Rome; and the invaluable frescos of Michael Angelo, Raphael, Domenichino, and Guido, were, and are left to perish here. It never has seemed any object to the Papal government to copy the paintings that are perishing, and very many of those that have been executed in mosaic are in no danger of being destroyed, and not very well worth preserving.

It requires about seven or eight years to finish a mosaic copy of a painting of the ordinary historical size, two men being constantly employed. It generally costs from eight to ten thousand crowns; but the time and expense are regulated, of course, by the intricacy of the subject and quantity of work.

Raphael's Transfiguration cost about 12,000 crowns, and the labour of nine years; ten men constantly working at it. The late works seem to me of very inferior execution to the copies of Guido's Archangel, Guercino's Santa Petronilla, and many of that date.

The slab upon which the mosaic is made, is generally formed of Travertine stone, connected by iron cramps. Upon the surface of this a mastic, or cementing paste, is gradually spread as the progress of the work requires it, and forms the adhesive ground or bed on which the mosaic

is laid. This mastic is composed of lime burnt from marble, and finely powdered Travertine stone, mixed to the consistence of a strong paste, with linseed oil. Into this paste are stuck the smalts (smalti) of which the mosaic picture is formed. They are a species of opaque vitrified glass, partaking of the mixed nature of stone and glass, and composed of a variety of minerals and materials, coloured, for the most part, with different metallic oxides. Of these, no less than seventeen hundred different shades are in use; they are manufactured in Rome in the form of long slender rods like wires, of different degrees of thickness, and are cut into pieces of the requisite sizes, from the smallest pin-point to an inch. When the picture is completely finished, and the cement thoroughly dried, it is highly polished.

This mosaic work, during the two years that I have known Rome, proceeded in that creeping indolent manner in which all undertakings go on here, if they go on at all. Few workmen were employed, and those work little. This manufactory now, in all the world, exists only in Rome; for the establishment in Milan, founded by the French, has fallen with them, and its abolition was decreed by the Austrian government.

Mosaic, though an ancient art, is not merely a revived, but an improved one; for the Romans chiefly used coloured marbles, or natural stones, in their mosaics; and although they appear to have also had the knowledge of some sort of composition, it admitted of comparatively little variety; but the invention of smalts has given it a far wider range, and made the imitation of painting far closer.

The Florence work is totally different from this, being merely inlaying *pietre dure*, or natural precious stones, of every variety, in marble or porphyry tables, by which beautiful and very costly imitations of shells, flowers, figures, &c., are formed, but it bears no similitude to mosaic or painting.

Besides this government establishment at Rome, there are hundreds of artists, or rather artisans, who carry on the manufactory of mosaics on a small scale. Snuff-boxes, rings, necklaces, brooches, ear-rings, &c., are made in immense quantity; and since the English flocked in such numbers to

Rome, all the streets leading to the Piazza di Spagna are lined with the shops of these *Musaicisti*.

Oriental shells are made at Rome into beautiful cameos, by the white outer surface being cut away upon the deeper-coloured internal part, forming figures in minute bassi-rilievi. The subjects are chiefly taken from ancient gems, and sometimes from sculpture and painting. The shells used for this purpose are chiefly brought from the Levant. The most celebrated artist in this curious branch of art, which was then peculiar to Rome, was Dies. These shell-cameos make beautiful ornaments.

The modern gems of the Pichlers, Natali, &c., are so well known, and so nearly approach to the perfection of the best Grecian ones, that I need say nothing in their praise. Though these celebrated artists are now dead, many of the living ones at Rome are little inferior to them, both in cameo and intaglio. Their subjects are sometimes taken from the paintings of great masters; but more frequently from ancient or modern sculpture.

Besides those, hundreds of artists find support at Rome, in making casts, sulphurs, &c., from ancient gems and medals, and in fabricating antiques, a most important and lucrative trade. Marble and stone-cutting are also beautifully executed both at Rome and Florence. Hopmartin, a remarkably ingenious German, executes models in bronze of the triumphal arches, columns, ruins, ancient vases, &c. of Rome. He has executed a bronze model of Trajan's Pillar, with the whole of the bas-reliefs, accurately copied—an extraordinary work.

If the fine arts prosper in Rome, the useful arts are in a woefully degenerate state. The mean, useless, unworkmanlike style in which everything of common life, every handicraft trade, is got through here, strikes one with much surprise. It is very bad, even compared to France, and what a contrast to England! Even jewellery is miserably finished here. The taste in the arts which might have been expected to pervade every branch, from the models of beauty which meet the eye at every turn, seems totally wanting.

LETTER LXXXVII.

EGINA AND PHIGALIAN MARBLES.

THE Egina marbles have been so completely restored by Thorwaldsen, in the true spirit and force of the original, that, in contemplating them, the eye feels nothing to desire.

The discovery of seventeen perfect specimens of a celebrated school, unique in its character, which flourished six hundred years before the Christian era, which was known to us only by the report of writers of antiquity (for not a single monument of it was extant), was beyond all hope, and is, perhaps, the most important accession to art that has taken place for ages.

A blank in its gradation is hereby filled up. The Egina School stands between the Etruscan and the Grecian, and verges upon both in some respects, though distinct from either in more important characteristics.

The best judges, indeed, have felt and acknowledged the difficulty of drawing a clear distinction between the Etruscan and the early Grecian; but, comparing the Egina marbles with undoubted Etruscan sculptures, it seems to bear a near resemblance to them in the well-known style of the drapery, and in the arrangement of the hair; in which two formal rows of the stiffest little curls are ranged round the unmeaning face. With diffidence, too, I would say, that the form of the helmets in the Egina marbles bears a striking similitude to those in that common sepulchral subject of the Etruscan urns,—the combat of Echetles; but I speak of the latter from remembrance. However this may be, the Egina sculpture has lost much of the monotony and the stiff erect rigidity of attitude that adheres in some degree to all the Etruscan statues, in

which the Egyptian, softened down and thawed into life, still appears. The Egyptian figures, indeed, always remind me of their mummies. One sees, too, that the artist, conscious of his weakness, timorously confined himself to that which was most easy of execution, making man as much as possible an erect pillar,—a sort of regular mathematical figure; and that he durst not venture upon any approach to the grace or freedom of nature, much less to momentary action, for which the Egina statues are remarkable.

Above all other sculpture, indeed, they are distinguished for their varied display of the human figure, for the strong muscular delineation, the wonderful anatomical precision, and the nice imitation of life which charms the eye. Still more striking are their bold and original attitudes, and their powerful expression and force of action.

What is the most singular, however, and the least admirable about them, is, that all the faces are prototypes of each other; and so far inferior to the figures, that it is obvious the style of an earlier age has been retained in them. This can only be accounted for from motives of religious veneration towards some particular model. It has been thought, on this account, that they represented the *Eacidæ*, the deified heroes of Egina; but no actions are recorded of these worthies that can explain the subject of this sculpture; besides, Minerva and the men are precisely similar, and it could not be necessary that she should bear the family resemblance; and all are equally devoid of expression, even to a degree of vacant idiotism. The countenances of the prostrate heroes, pierced with the death-wound, wear the same senseless smile as the rest.

All of them are on a scale considerably below that of nature, which obviously arose from the necessity of conforming their height to that of the pediments of the temple they adorned. They were found, I may say, by mere accident, in the island of Egina, in the year 1811, by Mr. Cockerell and Mr. Foster, Baron Haller and Mr. Linkh, in making an excavation, which had for its object the determination of some disputed points in Grecian architecture. From two of these gentlemen I had the parti-

culars of this interesting discovery, and to their valuable observations I have been indebted for much of the pleasure I received from the examination of the sculpture.*

On the western pediment of the temple, eleven of the statues were found nearly entire. On the eastern, five only were recovered, and these much shattered. All the rest on this side were wholly destroyed, and their scattered fragments have been collected in vain. This is the more to be lamented, because these statues are far superior to the others, and have been pronounced to be the work of a greater master. Their subject and arrangement seem to have been much the same, and will be best understood by attending to those which were found entire on the western pediment.

In viewing them, no one statue can, or ought to be, considered apart. They are parts of one great group, and we must attend, not so much to their individual appearance as their general effect. We see that the action of each has reference to the others, like the figures in a picture; and, indeed, never—except in these grand historical *statuary pictures*, which adorned the pediments of the Parthenon, of this Temple of Egina, and of most of the temples of ancient Greece—were the beauties and effects of sculpture and painting intimately combined; for to sculpture, besides its own peculiar advantages, is here given the grouping, composition, and relative action of painting. It is obvious that the combat here represented, is for the body of the dying hero (by far the most beautiful of them all), which one party is trying to seize, and the other to defend; and among all the varied explanations which have been given of the subject, that of the combat for the body of Patroclus seems to me by far the most satisfactory. In the midst appears Minerva, as described by Homer, animating the Grecians. Her statue and drapery are peculiarly fine. There is a peculiarity in her Ægis, which is destitute of the snakes.

The figure of the archer in the Phrygian cap, and the

* The accurate designs of their original position, drawn by Mr. Cockerell, from notes taken on the spot, give a very satisfactory idea of their connexion with each other.—See Quarterly Journal, Nos. 12 and 14.

close elastic dress, which covers, without concealing, his body, is very singular. He is supposed to be one of the Trojans.

Perfect common nature is represented in these statues, with admirable skill and science; but there is little of the ideal in any of them, except in the faultless figure of the dying hero, which is a masterpiece of sculpture.

They are obviously the works of an age when art had shaken off the shackles of earlier times, and made great advances to that perfection at which it afterwards arrived; but they are far removed from the grandeur of those works with which Phidias enriched the Parthenon; or the still brighter period, when the Laocoon, the Torso, the Dying Gladiator, and the Apollo, were designed, for the wonder and admiration of future ages.

The temple in which they were found is believed, I know not upon what authority, to have been that of Jupiter Panhellenius; yet, though there is abundant proof that there was such a temple in Egina, there is none whatever that there was no other; and as the statue of Minerva was found surmounting both pediments, it would seem more reasonable to ascribe the temple to her, especially as no vestige whatever of Jupiter has been discovered. This point is, however, extremely immaterial; further than that if this be not that famous Temple of Jupiter, and if its site could be elsewhere traced, the discovery of more hidden treasures might reward the industry of future excavators. The earthquake that buried these, may have involved other temples and other sculpture in its ruins.

It is a strange paradox, that it is to the destructive convulsions of nature we owe the preservation of some of the most valuable remains of art. Herculaneum and Pompeii, the bas-reliefs of the Arcadian Temple of Apollo* on Mount Cotylion near Phigalia, and the Egina Marbles, are by no means the only instances.

It is well known that the two English discoverers of the Egina Marbles took infinite pains to have them secured to our country, but in vain. At their sale, in the island of

* The Phigalian Marbles, now in the British Museum; the work of the same era as those of the Parthenon, but of very inferior sculpture.

Zante, the Prince Royal of Bavaria, not the Prince Regent of England, was their purchaser: they therefore adorn Munich, and not London. This is another instance of the miserable parsimony of the British Government in all matters relative to the Fine Arts.

LETTER LXXXVIII.

Hadrian's Villa.

We left Rome this morning for Tivoli, by the Porta San Lorenzo. Three miles from it we crossed the Ponte Mammolo, over the Anio, or Teverone, whose sleepy course is here destitute of beauty; and proceeded through the dreary waste of the Campagna, for ten long miles further, without meeting any passengers (excepting two or three beggars), or seeing a single sign of human habitation or of life; though mementos of death in abundance stared us in the face; for, besides the ruined tombs, black crosses by the wayside marked the frequent spots where murder had been committed. Artificial caves, hollowed out in the soft pozzuolana rock that bounded the road, were pointed out to us as the frequent lurking-place of assassins. So poor, however, and so few, seem to be the passengers between Rome and Tivoli, that I should suppose these murderers would get nothing but blood for their pains—and but little of that.

Longing for some object to break the tedium of the way, we looked out with great earnestness for 'the Lake of Tartarus,' which we were to pass; but it was not from our eyes that we had the first intimation of our approach to it; for we scented it from afar in such offensive effluvia, that every foul and fetid odour seemed congregated in one potent stench, which increased every moment till we passed the spot. Lake, there is none. Excepting one muddy pool, the thick viscid waters are dried up, or encrusted with a hard uneven substance, of an arid yellow colour, on which patches of stunted bushes were growing. The wide extent of this hideous crust marked the ancient surface of 'the Tartarean Lake.' Reeds, roots of plants, all

things of vegetable kind that grow near it, are rapidly changed, by its petrifying quality, into stone. The masses of rock all round it are of this curious fibrous texture. Near this dismal lake stands a ruined Gothic fortress, called Castello Archione.

As we proceeded on our way, the fumes still continued to increase, till, at the distance of about two miles, we reached the artificial bed of another foul blue fluid, for I cannot call it water,—which flowed across the road, conducted from the celebrated 'Sulphureous Lake,' about a mile distant, to drain which it has been cut. In part it has succeeded, and, besides, it is the nature of such waters to diminish, so that the ancient size of this lake is now greatly reduced. We left the carriage to walk to it, and on our way we picked up a bare-legged cicerone, a poor goat-herd, who told us all he knew about it,—and more. Arrived on the brink of the filthy flood, he embarked himself upon it on a little floating island of about two feet diameter, which was near the shore, and by the help of a long stick navigated himself about in this new species of vessel. Several of these floating islands, some of much larger dimensions, were dispersed over the pond; they are produced by the plants cohering together, and formed into a solid mass by the thick deposit from the sulphureous water, which possesses the same petrifying property as the Tartarean Lake. Several rustics had, by this time, collected round us, all of whom assured us that the lake is bottomless. That, however, is not the case, though it is very deep, and in one place measures upwards of thirty fathoms. They threw in stones, and made us observe how it 'boiled,' as they called it. It certainly bubbled for several minutes afterwards with great activity, which arose, I presume, from the sulphuretted gas being rapidly disengaged from the bottom by the percussion of the stone, and rising through the water. In the morning at sunrise, they assured us it spontaneously throws up these bubbles, and is quite covered with mist and steam. The water, though rather higher than the ordinary temperature, is cold to the touch. The peasants told us that the quarries of Tiburtine stone were near the lake, and assured us that

some ruins on its margin—apparently the remains of some of the baths which were much frequented for medical purposes in the days of the Romans—were the palace of Queen Zenobia. But though that royal captive, after gracing Aurelian's triumph, did take up her abode in the neighbourhood of Tibur, one would scarcely imagine she would choose to plant herself on the brink of this pandemonium.

Here are now no vestiges of the Sacred Grove and Temple of the Faun, who, in the days of the pious Æneas and his father-in-law, was the oracle of the whole country. I do think the old Latin monarch must have passed rather an uncomfortable night on the margin of this pestilent basin, in spite of his bed of a hundred sheep-skins, when he went to dream of the expediency of the future nuptials of Turnus and Lavinia.*

Soon after leaving the lake, we reached the Ponte Lucano, a spot so well known in painting, that I need scarcely describe it. It owes all its picturesque effect to the tower close by the bridge; for the Anio here, though shaded by trees, is nothing in itself. This tower, as the inscriptions upon it prove, is the tomb of M. Plautius and his family. It nearly resembles that of Cecilia Metella; like that, it is built of Tiburtine stone, and in a similar manner, it bears on its summit the walls and fortifications raised in the days of feudal warfare. It differs, however, in having had a front towards the road, composed of six Corinthian columns, some broken remains of which are still visible, and in not having had a sculptured frieze. It was built in the days of Vespasian.

It is curious that the inscription on this monument,

* At rex, sollicitus monstris (Lavinia's hair taking fire, &c.) oracula Fauni,
Fatidici genitoris, adit, lucosque sub alta
Consulit Albunea: nemorum quæ maxima sacro
Fonte sonat, sævamque exhalat opaca mephitim.
Hinc Italiæ gentes, omnisque Œnotria tellus,
In dubiis responsa petunt: huc dona sacerdos
Quum tulit, et cæsarum ovium sub nocte silenti
Pellibus incubuit stratis, somnosque petivit.
ÆN. lib. vii.

which records the dignities M. Plautius enjoyed and the victories he gained, ends with VIXIT ANN. IX. Though it is impossible that a consul and a general could have died at nine years of age, there is no appearance of any figure having been obliterated. Could it mean that he was consul during nine years?

The ancients were right in making a circle the symbol of eternity, not only from its having no commencement or termination, but because of its durability. Excepting the Pyramids, almost all the ancient buildings that remain entire, are circular. Not to mention the Colosseum, and the Amphitheatre of Verona, and the Sepulchre of Augustus, which, by great exertions, have been in part destroyed, the Pantheon, the Tombs of Hadrian, of Cecilia Metella, and of Munatius Plancus at Molo di Gaeta, are the most perfect remains of antiquity which our times can boast.

To the left of the Ponte Lucano, are some unknown ruins, apparently of Roman villas, and near them an ancient consular road may still be traced. We soon after passed, on the right of the road, the remains of two Roman tombs, on one of which,—probably the tomb of a knight,—is the common sepulchral rilievo of a man holding his horse by the bridle. Some people have called these the *lodges* to Hadrian's magnificent villa,—a truly English idea; but a little attentive observation will make their sepulchral destination sufficiently obvious.

Soon afterwards, we turned off to the right, and a short mile of bad rocky road brought us to the present entrance to the ruins of Hadrian's wonderful villa. It is situated on the plain at the foot of the hill of Tivoli, and, according to the writers of antiquity, covered an extent of three miles with its multiplied structures, its gardens, and its appurtenances. It rather resembled a city in itself than a single mansion. We know that Hadrian imitated here everything which had struck his fancy during his travels, and that the buildings and institutions of Egypt, Syria, and Greece, were assembled within its walls.*

These proud imperial ruins are now lost among thick

* Vide Spartianus.

olive groves; their floors, instead of being paved with pictured mosaics, are overgrown with grass; their broken reticulated walls are overhung with wild creeping plants; and their once magnificent halls are filled with thickets of aged ilex, and overshadowed by mournful cypresses and pine-trees; yet enough still remains to attest their former extent and splendour.

The house of the *custode*, on the left in entering, which is dignified by the title of a Casino, is built on some of the ancient walls. Close by it is a building with some niches for statues, and an arched recess for a fountain, the walls of which are covered with petrifactions. There is also a room, the roof of which is adorned with beautiful indented stucco, in patterns resembling arabesque, and in wonderful preservation. On the right is a theatre: the eye can still trace the semicircular ranges of seats, the porticos below them, the proscenium, and the orchestra, in the middle of which a colossal torso of a marble statue, supposed to have been of Hadrian, was lying on the ground. We trod the grass-grown stage, and disturbed from their ancient haunts, —not the Tragic nor the Comic Muse, nor yet the ranting Mask with his cothurnus, that had so often "fretted his little hour upon this stage,"—but a company of black hooded crows, whose hoarse complaining clamour now alone resounds here, instead of the dialogues of Plautus or Terence. Near it is the *Hippodromus*, a large open oblong space, for equestrian exercises, &c., now an olive grove; yet still, in its broken walls, the niches for the statues that once ornamented it, may be traced.

We proceeded down a long green avenue of tall cypress-trees, to the *Pœcile*, a double portico, built in imitation of the Pœcile of Athens, so called from the variety of the paintings with which it was adorned.* All that now remains of it consists of the lofty reticulated wall, nearly six hundred feet in length, on either side of which was a portico, supported by marble columns. Thus the poets and philosophers, who took their daily promenade here, and with whom Hadrian often used to mingle, could choose at pleasure its sunny or shady side.

* Pausanias, lib. i, cap. 15; and Pliny, lib. xxxv, cap. 9.

The south side commands a view of a large open space, supposed to have been a sort of parade for the troops to exercise in: and in the centre are remains of a sort of loggia, said to have been the station of the Emperor when he reviewed them.

A ruined semicircle to the left of the Pœcile is called the Temple of the seven Wise Men of Greece, because of its having seven niches for statues; although it bears no very decided appearance of ever having been a temple at all, and looks quite as like the upper end of a large hall. Then follows an immense rotunda, or circular building, which, because some marine monsters were observed among the paintings on the walls, is called a Marine Theatre. In the centre are some vestiges of a small building. In one part of the circle there is a recess, and opposite, about half-way up, are some traces of a roof, as if a corridor had run round it, which perhaps served also as a gallery.

Not far off is a vaulted grotto, with six niches in it, which our cicerone called a fountain, and maintained had supplied this maritime theatre,—just as effectually, certainly, as a pump would fill the sea.

Near the Rotunda are the remains of what are supposed to have been the libraries, one Greek, and the other Latin. They have been two stories in height, and old people say they remember a ruined staircase which led to the upper one, but there is now no trace of it left. Both here, and in some small adjacent apartments, we observed some vestiges of ancient paintings, almost obliterated; a vase, with flames rising from it, was all I could make out.

Beyond these we passed through what they call the Hospital, with divisions, as if for beds; and at its extremity we came upon a loggia, or elevated seat, from which we looked down on the artificial Vale of Tempe. Deserted and neglected as it is, the deep verdure of the carpet of turf that covers it, the tall cypress-trees that shade it, and the aged ilex that wreathe round the ruins which hang over it, deep rooted in their massy walls—in their wildness and luxuriancy of vegetation, have a beauty and a melancholy charm which accord with the ruined grandeur of this magnificent palace of the proud master of the ancient world.

Near here there seems to have been a stadium for foot-races. Two semicircular buildings, apparently baths, have been christened the Temples of Venus and Diana, although the four alcoves for statues within are of equal size and importance; consequently it is very improbable they have ever been dedicated to any one deity. Many are the scattered and unknown ruins to which not even antiquarian ingenuity has been able to affix a name. From these let us proceed to what has obviously formed a part of the palace itself: it consists of a great number of apartments of various dimensions—some very large and noble. It has evidently been two stories high; but how the lower story was lighted is certainly rather puzzling, for there is no appearance of windows. Possibly this range of rooms was only frequented at night, and therefore was only lighted by lamps; but there may have been another cause for it. The walls are in many places double, with a vacant space between them. This cannot have been intended as a precaution against damp in a climate such as this; and it is more reasonably supposed to have been a defence against the scorching blasts of the sirocco; and possibly the whole of this lower story was built without windows for the same reason, to serve as a cool retreat during the long continuance of this sultry wind in summer. The upper story was probably lighted from the roof. We observed a corridor which has evidently been so, for the square apertures at the top still remain.

The most interesting part of the ruins of the dwelling-house is the Cavædium, or open court, forming a fine oblong square, round which runs a corridor, supported by a noble colonnade; and in the centre, where a fountain formerly flowed, a lofty pine-tree has sprung up, throwing around its broad canopy of shade. We still traced here some faint vestiges of ancient painting and mosaic pavement. Not far from hence are some magnificent ruins, called the Quarters of the Prætorian Guard, which form an immense oblong square, and consist of arches four stories high. Some of the apartments seem to have been very small; four large rooms at the end are remarkably elegant. The stucco ornaments of the vaulted roofs are, in many parts, in high

preservation, and beautifully executed—almost with the effect of rilievo.

Can this be the *Prytaneum* which we know was built at Hadrian's Villa, in imitation of that of Athens, and was not merely a court of justice, but surrounded with the habitations of the judges and officers?

One of the most curious remains of Hadrian's Villa are the Canopus and Naumachia, supposed to be an imitation of the famous Egyptian Temple near Alexandria. The Naumachia is an oblong square, nearly six hundred feet in length, which has evidently, from the marks on the walls, been filled to a certain height with water. At the upper end of it is the Canopus, or temple of that deity. It is in the form of a semicircle, with an alcove like a fountain at the top, forming the seat of Canopus, the Egyptian Neptune, from which the water rushed down the rapid descent into the Naumachia. In the sides are niches for statues, and here all the Egyptian sculpture now at the Capitol was found. Behind the Temple of Canopus are covered channels for water; small secret chambers, supposed to have been intended for the convenience of the priests, and a very remarkable semicircular gallery, with conduits in the walls, for water, lighted from above. The ceiling is painted, but the designs can scarcely be traced. From the remains of buildings on one side of the Naumachia, and some corresponding vestiges on the other, it would seem that an elevated gallery or corridor, has surrounded it, for spectators to view the naval games, mock-fights, and races of this grand Aquatic Theatre.

When Hadrian celebrated the *Encænia* in this villa, it is said some Christian martyrs formed a part of the great sacrifice he offered up to Hercules.

The cicerone, *alias* vine-dresser, of this villa, next conducted us to the Schools and the Habitations of the Philosophers, which he seemed to be as well acquainted with as if he had lived among them; and then to what he denominated the Baths of the Women (the Baths of the Men had been already shown to us in a different part of the grounds), which are really elegant buildings. They chiefly consist of small apartments, two stories high, which are called the baths, and in the front of them are a hall and rotunda. Not

far from hence are the *Cento Camerelle*. They consist of about one hundred and fifty small arched apartments, or substructions made to support the hill, in some places of two, in others of three stories, according to the varying height of the ground. They are all arched, and plastered at the top, to resemble hewn stone, though built of reticulated work; they have no light or air but from the entrance, and no communication with each other, and are all the same size, excepting one large circular room, at the angle of the hill, probably for the commanding officer; for they are supposed, and probably with reason, to have served as barracks for soldiers.

At the Rocca Brune, there is a dark circular building, not worth describing, called the Temple of Minerva. Near it are 'the Elysian Fields,' which present a most melancholy aspect. Some narrow stagnant canals, like ditches, may have been meant for Cocytus, &c., and are certainly Stygian in hue; but images of the infernal gods, and Ixion on his whirling wheel, were found here, which serves to identify the place.

The Temple of Apollo, at a distance, on high ground, rising from the woods which embosom it, had a very striking and picturesque effect as we approached it, the golden sky of evening shining through the yawning chasms in its walls. It is said the statues of Apollo and the Muses, now in the Vatican, were found here.

The resurrection of the statues which once adorned this imperial villa, has filled the museums of Europe with some of their choicest treasures. It is, indeed, wonderful that so much of ancient sculpture should have come down to our times; for such was the ardour of the Christians, after the establishment of their religion, for demolishing the beautiful statues of the gods,—the false idols of Paganism,—that in order to preserve these prodigies of art, it was found necessary to appoint an Inspector of Statues; and a nightly guard patrolled the streets, to preserve them from mutilation or destruction.*

The age of Hadrian was the last great era of art, after which it rapidly declined, to rise no more. The sculptures

* Hist. de l'Art, liv. vi, c. 8.

of that period are distinguished by peculiar grace and beauty; and by that elegant contour, delicacy, and high finish, that denotes the polish of the last stage of refinement. It is scarcely necessary to observe, that they were entirely the work of Grecian artists. The Romans never attained to any celebrity in the arts, and to the last were obliged to bow to the genius of the people they had enslaved. It is indeed remarkable that the Greeks should have maintained their perfection in the arts so long after the degradation of their literature; for even in the reign of Commodus, their very language was so corrupted that they were unable to read their own poets.*

The destruction of the Villa Adriana, though not yet consummated, was early commenced. Caracalla began to despoil it of its exquisite sculptures, and from that time forward, it seems to have been abandoned to decay; and its wonders of art, its glories of antiquity, have perished along with it. Even the most portable of these, the masterpieces of statuary, have been buried in its ruins; and after serving as a quarry of the fine arts for ages, it probably still contains treasures destined to astonish future generations.

To attempt to form a regular plan of the roofless and broken walls of this once magnificent imperial palace, seems now to be the extreme of absurdity; yet many have been executed by Ligorio, Kircher, Ré, and others, which may be had at Rome.

We left it at last with regret, after having spent many hours in wandering among its ruins and its groves.

* Hist. de l'Art, liv. vi, c. 7, sect. 50.

LETTER LXXXIX.

TIVOLI—CASCADES—GROTTO OF NEPTUNE—SIREN'S CAVE—TEMPLE OF THE SIBYL, AND OTHER REMAINS OF ANTIQUITY—TOUR OF THE HILL—VILLA OF MECÆNAS—LUCIEN BONAPARTE'S MANUFACTORIES—RUINED VILLAS OF THE ANCIENT ROMANS—EXCURSION TO HORACE'S SABINE FARM—MAJESTIC RUINS OF THE AQUEDUCTS.

THE beauty of Tivoli consists in its rocks and waterfalls. It is to the Anio,—still the "præceps Anio,"—that it owes it all. And yet this is sufficient to constitute the most enchanting scenes. Amidst the dreary wilds of the Campagna you would never dream that a spot so romantic was at hand. For twenty tedious miles you cross its bare and houseless track, you ascend the hill of Tivoli amidst the sad sameness of the pale olive; you enter its narrow street and behold nothing but meanness and misery; you walk but a few steps, and what a prospect of unspeakable beauty bursts upon your view! Tremendous precipices of rock, down which roars a headlong torrent,—trees and bushy plants shading its foaming course,—cliffs crowned with the most picturesque ruins, and painted in tints whose beauty art can never imitate,—hills, and woods, and hanging vineyards; and Tivoli itself, which, peeping out amidst the dark cypresses at the top of these sunny banks, looks like an earthly paradise.

I deal little in description,—for words are inadequate to convey an idea of the beauties and varieties of nature. The pencil only can describe Tivoli; and though unlike other scenes, the beauty of which is generally exaggerated in picture, no representation has done justice to it, it is yet impossible that some part of its peculiar charms should not be transferred upon the canvas. It almost seems as if

TIVOLI, FROM IL CANIC COSIMATO.

nature had herself turned painter when she formed this beautiful and perfect composition.

Having viewed the fall from above, we descended the long steep precipice by a zigzag path to the Grotto of Neptune, a cave at the bottom, hollowed out in the worn and petrified rock by the boiling flood which for ages has beat against it, and on the brink of the tremendous gulf which receives it. The contrast between the white silvery foam of the water in the fall, and their Stygian blackness as soon as they reach this still and deep abyss, is most striking. It is like the torrent of life swallowed up in the gulf of death:—and like the promise of immortality, as we gazed upon it, a bright and beautiful rainbow suddenly sprung up, shooting across the spray, and connecting earth with heaven in a radiant arch of glory. Upon this painted arch, it is fabled that the messengers of the gods and the angels of light have descended from the skies; and may it not to us, in fancy, open the passage to brighter realms? It is the arch of promise, the bridge between distant worlds; and it seems set in heaven to re-assure guilty man, that to the height from which he has fallen by sin he may reascend by faith.

But I must turn from the fall of man to the fall of water —or rather the falls—for here there are two: one formed by a small branch of the river, the other by its main body. Their united streams rush onward, and precipitate themselves into a tremendous abyss beneath a natural bridge of rock, called the Ponte del Lupo. This wonderful view can only be seen from the Siren's Cave, to which we descended on the opposite side of the river, by a path continually wet with the dew of the spray, and so steep and slippery that, to save ourselves from falling, we had to cling to the bushes which fringe the sides of the precipice. At length we reached the Siren's Cave. But what a prospect is here! From these hollow dripping rocks, on the very brink of the impetuous torrent, which almost laves our feet as it foams along, we look up to the thundering cataracts above us, almost deafened with their ceaseless roar—and look down into the shuddering unseen depths of that dark abyss, which yawns beneath to swallow up the foaming waters.

Never shall I forget the view from the Siren's Cave. The

tremendous cataracts above—the fearful gulf below—the depth of which our shuddering sight vainly seeks to fathom; the roar, the rage, the strife of the maddening waters, impelled onward as if by an irresistible destiny to their terrific doom; the narrow step that separates us from their sweeping fury, hovering as we stand on the brink of perdition. No: words can never speak its sublimity!

To me a mighty cataract has always seemed the most sublime of all the terrors of nature. There is something in its continuity and its unabating rage, which strikes our soul with awe and wonder. All things else in nature change and perish,—and all that are the most fraught with force and power, are the most evanescent, excepting this. The tempests of the ocean pass away,—the thunder-storm endures but for an hour,—the dread hurricane is soon at rest—the volcano's red streams of liquid fire grow cold, and are extinguished—and the earthquake itself, that shakes the foundations of the earth, and swallows up whole nations in its yawning womb, is but the convulsion of a day. But we behold the ceaseless fall of that torrent, which has held on its raging course from the beginning of time, and will continue till its latest close,—which knows no rest, no stop, no change,—by night and by day, in storm and in sunshine, the same in every moment of the past and the future—yesterday, to-day, and for ever!

Few can stand on that giddy brink, without horror and trepidation! Such is the roar of the waters, that the voices of my companions were unheard; and such the extreme cold produced by the rapid evaporation of the thick showers of spray, that on a day of intense heat, our teeth chattered in our heads.

The river emerging below from this deep abyss, rushes foaming down the rocky winding dell, forming in its course other falls, and receiving those of a third branch of the Anio, which separates above the town, flows round it, and foams down the precipice at the Villa of Mecænas, in many a glittering cascade, to join its parent stream.

Tivoli itself is lost from below. We might be amidst the remotest solitudes of Nature; but the airy temple of the Sibyl on the cliff above, overhanging the flood, recals the

TEMPLE OF THE SIBYL, TIVOLI.

works of man in all their ancient greatness, and the times when he himself was great.

This beautiful temple, which stands on the very spot where the eye of taste would have placed it, and on which it ever reposes with delight, is one of the most attractive features of the scene, and perhaps gives to Tivoli its greatest charm. One cannot but marvel at the inconceivable barbarism of that Goth who, after gazing upon it in a spot like this, would have packed it up and carried it away, to bury it in an obscure park in England.*

Independent of the situation, it may serve as a model of architecture; so perfect and so exquisitely beautiful are its design, its symmetry, and proportions. It is believed to be of the Augustan age. The small circular *cella* is surrounded with a portico, which has formerly consisted of eighteen Corinthian columns, of which ten only are now standing. Fortunately they are left on the side most essential to the beauty of the view; and those which are fallen, perhaps tend to give it the interest and picturesque character of a ruin, without destroying its beauties as a building. The foliage of the capitals is of the olive, the frieze is sculptured with rams' heads and festoons of flowers; and it is remarkable that the columns, which are of Tiburtine stone, have no plinths.

It is the fashion now, merely because it is circular, to call it the Temple of Vesta. But this was one of the most common forms of ancient temples, and by no means exclusively appropriated to that goddess. Why, therefore, may not the famous Temple of the Sibyl have been circular also? Does it not exactly answer to the situation? Is it not still "Albunea alta?" the "Domus Albuneæ resonantis?"†

* The late Lord Bristol—that man of taste—formed this project, and actually bought it of the innkeeper in whose yard it stands, and was proceeding to have it packed up to send to England (every stone numbered, so as to re-erect it), when luckily the government interposed, declared Roman ruins to be public property, and as such prohibited its removal.

† I need scarcely observe, that Albunea, the Tiburtine Sibyl, was one of the ten gifted maids whose books of prophecy were preserved in the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, and received as the Oracles of Italy.

Not far from it are the remains of another ancient temple, of an oblong form, now metamorphosed into the Church of S. Giorgio, with a portico of four Ionic columns in front. A sepulchral figure of a man on a tomb, which was found here, and also the Anio reclining on his urn, were each in turn christened the Sybil, and this building is now, by all the erudite, called the Temple of the Sibyl. It may as probably have been any one of the many temples that adorned ancient Tibur.

We are told to look for the site of the Temple of Hercules where the Cathedral now stands, and we may fancy it where we please. As early as the days of Constantine it is said to have been converted into a christian church, and dedicated to S. Lorenzo. Augustus, who generally spent the summer here, used to sit in its portico to administer justice.* I believe it was here too he sometimes appeared as a mendicant; for he used to beg one day in every year, holding out his hand to receive alms,—a penance he subjected himself to in order to propitiate the wrath of Nemesis,† whose supposed delight it was to humble the proud and the prosperous.

Tibur was the town sacred to Hercules;‡ so indeed was almost every neighbouring place and scene, not excepting early Rome itself. But the antiquity of Tibur goes as far back as the light of history. It can be traced more than five hundred years before Rome had a name, and its origin is lost in the obscurity of fable. According to Virgil, it was founded by some youths, who must have come from Argos,§ while the world was yet young, for that purpose. Strabo, as well as the poets,‖ ascribes its origin to a Greek colony. Still, in the town arms, it calls itself 'Superbum Tibur,'¶ though a more wretched place can hardly be conceived. But enough of antiquities.

* Suetonius, August.

† Suet. in Vit. Calig.

‡ "Urbs Herculi sacra."

§ Æn. lib. vii.

‖ "Tibur Argeo positum Colono."

HORACE, lib. ii, ode vi.

"——— jam mœnia Tiburis udi,
Stabant, Argolicæ quæ posuere manus."

OVID, Fasti, iv. 71.

¶ Virgil, Æn. lib. vii, v. 627.

Mounted on asses we made the tour of the hill. We first cross the Anio by a wooden bridge, in face of a cascade, which at any other place would be loudly extolled, but at Tivoli is never even named,—then wind along the steep side of the hill,—its olive-crowned banks rising steep above, and the river roaring in its rocky bed below. In the whole of this delightful little tour of about two miles, we see almost at every step a new and beautiful picture. The cascades at the Grotto of Neptune, the temples, the caves, the rocks, the woods, and the ruins, appear in continually varying combinations of beauty. The spring was out in all its joy and freshness. The flush of nature, the young green of the tender foliage, the banks tufted with violets, the trees glowing with blossom, the song of the birds, the sweet smell of the flower of the vines, and the brightness and luxuriance of vegetation, made one's heart bound with joy.

We descended the precipitous bank nearly to the bed of the river, to see the *gran' cascatelle*, as our rustic ciceroni called the beautiful broken fall, or falls, which the river makes below. The effect of the *dust of the water* (polvere dell' acqua), as they called the spray, in the brilliancy of the noon-day sun, was peculiarly fine. They assured us this fall is a hundred and eighty feet in height; be this as it may, it forms one of the most enchanting and picturesque scenes in the world. I cannot say quite so much for the long small straggling *cascatelle* which come tottering and tumbling down the face of the rock at the Villa of Mecænas, like long silver hairs, "streaming like a meteor to the troubled air," though they too are beautiful; and seen, as we first beheld them, gleaming through the trees, with the long arcades of the ruined villa above, they had a very striking effect. We crossed the river by the Pontecelli, and reascended its opposite bank to the town, by the Via Valeria,* an ancient consular road. Part of its original construction, huge, flat, irregular blocks of stone, fitted closely into each other, like the Appian Way, still remain.

We stopped to examine *il Tempio della Tosse*,† as the

* Vicovaro is supposed to be the ancient Valeria.

† Temple of the Cough. Great antiquaries have doubted that there could be so absurd a deity: I cannot see why there might not as well

people of Tivoli call a picturesque ruin of hexagonal form, overhung with wild shrubs and evergreens, with four arched entrances, windows, and niches for statues within and without. Bearing a considerable resemblance to the Temple of Minerva Medica, it has equally puzzled the antiquaries, some of whom call it a bath, some a temple, and some a tomb.

Two other vestiges of ruins, supposed to have been sepulchres, near here, are, from their form, called the buttresses (gli pilastri) of Tivoli.

On the other side of the road, close to the town, we entered the Villa of Mecænas. It is quite certain that Mecænas had a villa here, and wholly impossible to prove either that this was or was not it. But since tradition has affixed to it, perhaps rightly, the name, why should it not be retained? Why should we not indulge the belief, whilst standing beneath its ruined arches and corridors, and gazing upon the classical scenes it commands, that this was indeed the far-famed Villa of Mecænas? Whatever it was, however, the remains are very extensive, and the situation singularly fine. It stands on the highest ridge of the height, overlooking, on one side, the far-extended plains of the Campagna, with Rome in the distance, bounded by purple mountains, and on the other the deep romantic dell of the rushing river, with its waterfalls, its woods, its rocks, its ruins, and its caves.

On the side of Rome you still see the arches under which passed the public road, and the Doric porticos, looking to the Anio, are in high preservation. The style of building, which consists of small stones fitted curiously together, is very remarkable. These arcades and porticos, the large open court or cavædium, the atrium, the chambers opening upon it, the second story to which we can still ascend, the lofty subterranean hall beneath, the massive arches of stone,

be a temple to Cough on the Anio, as to Fever on the Palatine; nor why it was not as reasonable to deify diseases as vices,—which were common objects of worship among the Romans. Besides, as the air of Tibur was noted for its salubrity, it was probably famous for its cure of cough; and so a temple for sacrifices, prayers, propitiation, and thanksgiving to it, would naturally arise here.

and all the innumerable and interesting vestiges we see, impress us with a high idea of the extent and magnificence of this ancient villa.

I grieve to say that it is deformed by the greasy operations of a filthy oil-mill, and the grimy apparatus of a gunpowder manufactory, together with the hideous wreck of an iron-foundry, which luckily failed. The project was abandoned, but the dirt remains. All the black Elba iron-stone, and the dross and the cinders, and the abomination belonging to it, are still blackening every place, reflecting no great credit on the taste of the present proprietor—Prince Lucien Bonaparte.*

Many were the ruins, or rather substructions, of Roman villas, which we had passed in our tour of the hill, and our rustic cicerone did not fail to attach to each of them the name of some celebrated Roman who had once possessed a retreat here. We did not, however, see *the* villa which Julius Cæsar sold to defray the expenses of his Ædileship, nor that in which his own murder was planned by Brutus and Cassius;† but we saw the Villa of Horace at the church of S. Antonio—though I see little reason to imagine he ever had a villa at Tibur; for he was poor, and his Sabine farm was only twelve miles off; and when he resided amidst the beauties of Tibur, it was probably at the country-houses of Mecænas and his other friends. We saw, too, the Villa of Quintilius Varus, still called *Quintiliolo;* and of Catullus, which bears the name of *Truglia*, supposed to be derived from *Catullii;* though, for the life of me, I cannot see any very great resemblance between these names. To these

* I believe this smelting business was only a pretext to enable Lucien Bonaparte, unsuspected, to send vessels to the island of Elba from whence he imported the iron-ore, and thus to hold constant communication with his brother. It ceased with Napoleon's flight from the island.

† Vide Suetonius. Life of Julius Cæsar. I was amused by the experience I had of the method of christening ruins here. On my first visit, I asked one of our ciceroni, ironically, if he could not show me this Villa of Cassius, but he had no place for it: on my return in autumn, he accompanied us again, but having forgotten me, he pointed to a heap of stones, saying, "Ecco gli avanzi creduti della Villa di Cassio."

two, however, we may attach some credit; but we also saw the villas of Lepidus, of the poet Archias, of Piso, of Propertius, of Vopiscus,* and of many others, which I think was enough in all reason.

We saw one which was more than enough,—a modern villa, a princely villa, and a most hideous villa,—the Villa d'Este. It was erected by the Cardinal Hippolito d'Este, the nephew of the patron of Ariosto, and it is really of a piece with the taste which his worthy uncle showed in that famous speech he made to the poet, on returning the Orlando:—"*Dove, Messer Ludovico, avete pigliato tutte queste coglionerie?*"†

One cannot but wonder who could have turned from the beautiful waterfalls of Tivoli to invent these foolish waterworks. Who could have beheld these luxuriant shades and groves, and projected these vile clipt hedges and tormented trees? Who, amidst all these enchanting beauties of nature, could have collected together all these deformities of art? What strange depravity of taste! And yet, stranger still, these wretched gardens are admired and imitated by the Italians! They were, it seems, the first of the kind—the fruitful parent of all trees clipped into animals and cyphers, and all water converted into bushes and musical men; on which account I bear them a peculiar grudge, for I hold in utter abhorrence the whole of their monstrous and unnatural progeny.

Not under this definition, certainly, come the waterfalls of Tivoli itself, though you will be surprised to hear they are artificial. Sixtus V. made the cascade at the Grotto of Neptune, as it now stands. That most active of popes, not satisfied with his indefatigable labours in art, set to work to alter nature herself. However, he seems to have borne in mind, better than the Cardinal, the poet's precept,

L'Arte che tutto fa, nulla si scopre,"‡

* From the minute description of the villa of Vopiscus by Statius, it seems to have been exactly in the situation of some ruins near the Temple of the Sibyl.

† "Where, Ludovico, did you pick up all this nonsense?"

‡ Tasso.

for the eye detects nothing of it,—nature seems unaided.*

I forgot to mention, that, on the way down to the Grotto of Neptune, there is a distinct impression of the segment of a modern cart-wheel in the solid rock. It is difficult to understand how such an immense body of stone should have been formed above it since the very earliest period such a wheel could have been left here; and still more difficult otherwise to account for the phenomenon. We were told, too, that an ancient iron instrument had been extracted from the heart of a block of stone, some years ago. It certainly seems as if these precipices of rock had been deposited by the Anio, because it rapidly petrifies every substance left in its waters, and encrusts it with a deposit which, both to the eye, and when subjected to chemical analysis, is precisely similar to the stone of which they are composed,—the Tiburtine, or Travertine stone. This cart-wheel impression has made a great impression upon the Wernerians. They think it puts a spoke in the wheel of the Huttonian hypothesis. Far be it from me to enter upon the perilous field of geological controversy, and I scarcely venture to hint even to you, that I cannot but believe that *both* the elements of fire and water, so powerful in decomposition, had a considerable, and neither of them an exclusive share, in the composition of the globe. That there should be parties at all in matters of science, is at once ridiculous and lamentable; but I must leave the subject, and close my letter, which already so greatly exceeds all reasonable bounds, that I have no room to give you much account of the excursion to Horace's Sabine Farm. It is about twelve miles from Tivoli; the place is now called Licenza, corrupted, we may fancy, from *Digentia*. Little of the poet's mansion remains, excepting some mosaic pavement, but the natural features of the scene are unchanged; and it well repays the labour of the journey, to drink of the spring which he has

* The same remark applies also to the famous Fall of Terni,—the Caduto del Marmore, which is likewise made by art. It is curious, too, that the waters of the Velino, as well as the Arno, have a powerfully petrifying quality.

described, to gaze upon the scenery which formed the daily objects of his contemplation, and to fancy we discovered all that had in turn been the theme of his song,

> "Me quoties reficit gelidus Digentia rivus,
> Quem Mandela bibit," &c.
>
> Hor. lib. i, Ep. 18.

Even if you have not sufficient leisure or patience to undertake this distant and fatiguing expedition upon donkeys (the only steeds which Tivoli affords) I would recommend you, by all means, to visit the aqueducts, which are little more than a mile from the Porta San Giovanni. Here, the noble arches of the Aqueduct of Claudius, thrown over the river and the road, built of immense blocks of Tiburtine stone, overgrown with ivy and wild brushwood, strike the eye with their grandeur; immediately behind them appears a lower line of ancient arches, on the top of which stands a ruined Gothic tower, the remains of bloody feudal wars; the river rushing beneath, amid rocks, and crossed by a rustic bridge, forms a most picturesque contrast to the stupendous arch of the great aqueduct, which also spans its bed; beneath another of its arches, the rural road we were traversing, passes. The effect of this scene—the dark ivy, the ruined tower, the distant hills, the rocks, the woods, lighted up by the brilliant tints of the evening sky of Italy—with the group of ourselves, our asses, and our peasant guides—formed altogether one of the most picturesque combinations I ever beheld.

Beyond this, the aqueducts accompanied us a long way, now entering the hills, through which the water was carried in conduits, and again emerging; appearing and disappearing in this manner, sometimes three or four times in the space of half a mile; but the scenery becomes comparatively tame and uninteresting, and there is nothing worth seeing.

We left Tivoli at last with great regret. It is not merely its natural beauty, great as that is, that forms its strong attraction to every mind of taste and feeling. There is not a mouldering heap of stone, that once formed the villa of a Roman, that does not recal those great names and that bright age of antiquity so dear to remembrance; nor a spot that is not immortalized in the most classic strains of poesy.

On scenes of beauty, such as these, we must ever gaze with admiration; but we view them with redoubled interest, when we think that the great in every age have also gazed upon them; and we feel that they possess a more powerful charm from having been the chosen retreat of those whose memory is consecrated among men.

The voices of its bards still seem to whisper in its winds and murmur in its fountains; the muses still linger in its consecrated groves; and the spirits of its great philosophers still seem to hover round the mouldering walls of their ancient homes, and the forgotten sepulchres where their remains repose.

LETTER XC.

FRASCATI—VILLAS OF THE MODERN ROMANS—CATO—PORCIAN MEADOWS—LAKE REGILLUS—RUINS OF TUSCULUM—SITE OF CICERO'S VILLA—NEW EXCAVATIONS—TUSCULUM AND POMPEII—LUCIEN BONAPARTE'S VILLA—TOMB AND VILLA OF LUCULLUS—MONUMENTS TO CARDINAL YORK AND THE PRETENDER.

IF Tivoli was the favourite retreat of the ancient Romans, it is not so of the moderns. They leave its rocks, its caves, its woods, its waterfalls, and its ruins, to be gazed upon by peasant eyes—for none but rustics inhabit it; and for the most part, they fix their large, dull, formal, comfortless, country-seats, in a cluster at Frascati; which may be a very pleasant place, but wants that living stream that gives Tivoli its charm, and all those classic ruins and remembrances, that invest it with a still higher interest. Frascati does not occupy the site of the ancient Tusculum, which was on the top of the hill, while it is built on the side, a mile at least from it; nor is there a single vestige of antiquity, or spot famed in classic lays, near its proud villas. But it is only half the distance from Rome, and that is, perhaps, the greatest beauty to a people who consider rural life as banishment.

Frascati is said to have derived its name from the *frasche*, or leafy boughs of trees, with which the unfortunate inhabitants of Tusculum constructed their huts, when their city was razed to the ground by the barbarous (barbarized) Romans, in the twelfth century.* In *frasche*, it may be said, they still live; for beautiful woods of arbutus, ilex,

* In the year 1187. A few years previous to this the Tusculans had defended their city bravely from the attacks of the Romans, whom they had defeated when led on by Frederick Barbarossa, with immense loss.

cypress, and the stone-pine, shade the stately villas which surround, and indeed almost compose, Frascati.

We went through a most tiresome succession of these villas. They are all like large palaces, carried from the city into the country. Rooms of state, not of domestic habitation; and decorations, not conveniences, seem to prove that all is meant for show, not use, and made to look at rather than to live in.

Out of doors, their little circumscribed, artificial grounds; their clipped tress, formal theatres, bad statues, vile *giuochi d'acqua*, tricks, and puppet-shows, are a wretched substitute for gardens and pleasure-grounds and extended parks, in all the bloom and luxuriance of "Nature to advantage dressed." At the Villa Ludovisi (now Conti) we saw long waterfalls tumbling down stone steps, in a most leisurely manner, and divers *giuochi d'acqua* of different species. But at the Villa Aldobrandini, or Belvedere, we were introduced to the most multifarious collection of monsters I hope ever to behold. Giants, centaurs, fauns, cyclops, wild beasts, and gods, blew, bellowed, and squeaked, without mercy or intermission; and horns, pan's-pipes, organs, and trumpets, set up their combined notes in such a dissonant chorus, that we were fain to fly before them; when the strains that suddenly burst forth from Apollo and the nine Muses, who were in a place apart, compelled us to stop our ears, and face about again in the opposite direction.

When this horrible din was over (and it was put an end to at our earnest supplication), we were carried back to admire the now silent Apollo and Muses,—a set of painted wooden dolls, seated on a little mossy Parnassus, in a summer-house,—a plaything we should have been almost ashamed to have made even for the amusement of children. All these creatures, in the meantime, were spouting out water. The lions and tigers, however contrary to their usual habits, did nothing else; and the "great globe itself," which Atlas was bearing on his shoulders, instead of "the solid earth," proved a mere aqueous ball, and was overwhelmed in a second deluge. I was sitting patiently on one of the steps at the door, waiting the pleasure of my companions to depart, when, to their inexpressible amusement,

water suddenly began to spirt up beneath me, and all round about me, drenching me with a shower from the earth instead of the skies.

The view from this villa is beautiful; and there are some frescos in the rooms, said to be very fine; but whether my admiration was chilled by my cold bath, or whether they really are not very admirable, I did not think them so.

The Villa Mondragone has more windows than days in the year; I ought rather to speak in the past tense; for, about eighteen years ago, it was despoiled by Neapolitan brigands, and has now scarcely any windows at all. I saw nothing but the colossal bust of the younger Faustina, lying neglected on the ground among rubbish; the head severed from the neck. The famous bust of Antinoüs (the finest Antinoüs in the world), which also belonged to this villa, was carried off by the French as a part of the Borghese Collection, and still remains in the Louvre.

The ride to Mondragone, through magnificent avenues of ilex, is truly beautiful. From the grounds near it rises the beautiful height of Monte Algido,* once the seat of the ancient city of Algidum, now covered with woods, the haunt of notorious robbers. Monte Porcio, on the west, the reputed birth-place of Cato, and the hereditary property of his family, is a highly interesting object. It was here that Curius Dentatus, the triumphant conqueror of Pyrrhus, fixed his humble abode, and was found boiling his turnips when the Samnite ambassadors came to proffer him their gold. Below Monte Porcio the country people pointed out to us the Porcian Meadows, the *Prati Porcii*, as they still call them. They also showed us Colonna, near which, and at the base of Monte Falcone, is the Lake Regillus,—now little better than a puddle,—so famed for the victory gained over the sons of Tarquin, when Castor and Pollux, after fighting in the ranks of the Roman army, brought the news of the victory with preternatural speed to Rome, and disappeared with their foaming steeds in the waters of the Lake Juturna.

At Frascati we mounted our asses and ascended the hill to visit the site of Tusculum, having, with some difficulty

* Horace, lib. i, Od. 21, calls it "Gelido Algido."

got the mob of ragged ciceroni who flocked around us,—ambitious, not of the honour but the profit of attending us, reduced to one-half. Emerging from the woods which cover its lower part, we passed the Capuchin convent, and soon began to remark the stones and weed-covered heaps that form the scattered remains of the city whose name is famed throughout the civilized world.

The laurel flourishes at the Ruffinella, formerly the country-house of the Jesuits, now Lucien Bonaparte's, and, in the opinion of many, once the site of Cicero's Tusculan Villa. It is situated high on the hill, near the ruins of Tusculum, and therefore it perhaps would seem a more probable situation for it than Grotta Ferrata, two miles off, in the valley. Some bricks that were picked up here, inscribed with the name of Cicero, seem to give support to this opinion; for if his villa had been at Grotta Ferrata, it seems improbable that such heavy articles would have been brought from thence up this mountain to add to the useless heaps that were before lying here from the wreck and ruin of the city. We may therefore, perhaps, venture to indulge the belief that we really stand upon the site of the Villa of Cicero, and that the beautiful mosaic pavement found here, of a Minerva's head surrounded with masks, now in the Vatican, once belonged to it.

Some people again have imagined that he had one villa here, near the top of the hill, and another at the bottom, at Grotta Ferrata. It certainly seems improbable that he should have had two villas within two miles of each or the,—though the Borghese family have now three within a circuit of the same extent. Cicero, however, always speaks of one Tusculan villa only, and he ought to know best. But the hypothesis of the two villas was that which pleased our guides; and they pointed out to us some ruins above the Ruffinella, consisting of a sort of portico with two ranges of arches, and assured us these were the real identical ruins of Cicero's upper villa, and that a subterranean way, of which they showed us the mouth, leads from hence to Grotta Ferrata, his lower villa; though why Cicero should have made the road to his house underground rather than above is somewhat difficult to understand. One of

these men declared he had advanced along it more than a mile with a Russian, who would explore it, but that they were then obliged to turn back, being nearly suffocated—a misfortune that might probably have happened to Cicero himself, if he had ever gone that road.

My learned donkey-driver and cicerone—for so he styled himself—next pointed out some remains of buildings, which he called '*La scuola di Cicerone*' (the school of Cicero), and he straightway began to explain to us who Cicero was, conceiving him to be a personage whom we never could have heard of; and he certainly gave us much new information concerning him, for he told us that he was '*un gran' maestro*,' not of philosophy or rhetoric, but 'of languages;' and that he taught a great many *ragazzini* (little boys) twenty-four different tongues—not to mention reading, writing, and arithmetic!

It would have been impossible to have convinced him that Cicero was not a schoolmaster.* To this avocation, he assured us, *Cicerone* added that of showing all the *cose rare* of the place to strangers (like himself), on which account he, our *cicerone*, was called after him!

Among the shapeless heaps of ruin which cover the hill, the *gradus* of an ancient amphitheatre are very discernible, the lower parts of which are entirely overgrown with bushes and brambles. Our guide called it a *Coloseo;* for this, from an individual, has become a generic, name for amphitheatres, —at least I suppose so, for I heard it also at Old Capua,— just as a *Vesuvio* is the universal Italian appellation of a volcano.

On one of the large blocks of stone that were lying about near here, dug up in Lucien Bonaparte's late excavation, I observed this inscription:

. . . . LOCAVIT P. GABINI . . . .

I have since found that other vestiges had previously given

* We find, by one of Cicero's letters, that when driven into retirement, after the death of Pompey, he instituted a philosophical academy in his own house at Tusculum; some confused idea of which, picked up from the discourse of the strangers whom he followed, had doubtless occasioned the blunder of our ragged guide as to the profession of Cicero.

rise to the belief that the villa of Gabinius was near here, and this inscription, perhaps placed by some descendant of the Tribune, seems to confirm it.

Prince Lucien is carrying on the excavations amongst the ruins of Tusculum with great spirit. He has already brought to light an ancient street, or road, paved with large flat unsquared stones, laid down in their natural irregular form, but closely fitted together, like the pavement of the Via Appia, or the streets of Pompeii. It has a very solid, but somewhat rude and clumsy appearance. This Tusculan street, however, has not, like those of Pompeii, side-paths, or trottoirs, for foot-passengers, though, like them, it has a fountain at the corner.*

The reticulated walls of a row of houses, with remains of yellow stucco upon them, still more strongly reminded us of the disinterred mansions of Pompeii. I wonder if the travellers, who tell us that in its streets "they could not help being astonished that the inhabitants of the town did not appear," would have the same feelings here. I own I never experienced them in either place. I never "hesitated to enter a house in Pompeii, lest the master should come to meet me," or expected the oil-merchant, or the wine-seller "to jump up behind the little marble counters of their shops."† Indeed, this impression is to me wholly incomprehensible. Broken walls, open doorways, empty chambers,

* In these simple fountains, the water generally flows through the open mouth of a marble ram's head, or sometimes a mask, into a deep trough or cistern.

† There are two oil-shops at Pompeii, with large earthern jars for the oil, sunk in the narrow marble counter. In another shop, this little slab of marble is marked with rims, apparently stained from the wet bottoms of cups; and as coffee was unknown in those days, we must suppose it to have been a place for the sale of wine, or liqueurs, if they had any. We know that *Thermopolia,* or shops where warm liquors were sold, were in use as early as the first Punic war, and probably this was one of the Thermopolia of Pompeii. Next door to one of the oil-shops, is a baker's shop, with a furnace and oven for baking bread, and great stone mills, exactly on the construction of our coffee hand-mills, for grinding the flour. Is it possible that the ancient Romans had no better contrivance? Scripture, which was contemporaneous with this period, speaks of "two women grinding at a mill;"—in all probability just such a mill as this at Pompeii.

with the painted stucco half stripped off; floors, with the pavement torn up; and houses wholly roofless, and open to the light of heaven,—can this give an idea of habitation? No—it presents an appearance of a ruined and forsaken city, whose inhabitants have gone down to the grave. It is, indeed, wonderful to think that two thousand years ago these chambers, and streets, and theatres, and temples, were thronged with busy citizens—wonderful to see the freshness of the paintings where they have been left on the walls, of the names of the people above their doors, of the idle, unmeaning scrawls, scratched in their vacant hours, of the stone *triclinium* where they used to eat, and of the marble altars where they used to worship. But there is nothing to remind us of present life, or human occupation. All is ruinous and desolate. I ought, perhaps, to except the half-finished buildings of the Forum, with its basilica, temples, &c., which, having been shattered by one of the earthquakes that gave warning (unheeded, uncomprehended warning) of the coming destruction,—the unfortunate Pompeians were in the act of repairing and rebuilding, when Vesuvius, after the repose of countless ages, burst forth into those flames that have never since been quenched, and into that tremendous eruption which overwhelmed their city beneath its ruins.* There, indeed, every object tends to impress the eye with the belief of present business and occupation. The large blocks of stone, half-chipped over with the fresh marks of the chisel,—the flags lying ready to insert in the half-finished pavement—the Doric columns round the Forum

* Pompeii was covered with the soft ashes from the volcano, which are easily removed. So, probably, was the neighbouring village (or rather, perhaps, villa) of Stabiæ. Herculaneum is, however, filled with a substance which time has turned into stone. It was formerly thought to be congealed lava; but had that fiery torrent inundated the city, the bronze statues, and all the metallic and glass vessels, which were found entire, would have been fused; it is therefore conjectured that the beds of ashes which filled it almost instantaneously, were mixed with the streams of boiling water which are thrown out in every eruption, and were, we know, in this; and that this mud, hardening, has produced the tufo which fills it. The impression of the head of one of the bronze statues was found on the stone in which it was cased, like a mould; so that the mass must have been in a liquid or soft form when it closed round it.

half-raised,—the temples at the extremities half-built,—the walls of unequal height half-carried up,—all had such an air of new buildings going on, that, mistaking the men who were digging out the rubbish for workmen employed in erecting them, a gentleman of our party indignantly asked them what they were building there?

Excepting this spot in Pompeii,—the last excavated, and by far the most interesting,—there is nothing to call up such a delusion; nothing that does not speak of the past rather than the present.

I remember nothing surprised me more in Pompeii, than the diminutive size of every object. The narrow track of the wheels down the streets, which showed the smallness of their carriages; the little streets themselves; the little houses; the ridiculously little rooms, no larger than a light closet; the little shops, and even the little temples, seemed calculated for a race of pigmies; and one could hardly understand how that portly personage—a Roman in his toga, could have moved about in them.*

But I forget that I am at Tusculum, not at Pompeii. Its few remains that are above ground I have already noticed. It seems to have been built upon the bed of some volcanic eruption of incomputable antiquity, for lavas have been dug out below the ruins, and also quantities of cinders, like those of Vesuvius; with which, indeed, the whole hill is covered. In this respect, too, it resembles Pompeii, where, beneath the foundations of the houses, lavas, &c. are brought up; and even at the distance of three hundred palms† below the surface (the greatest depth that has been bored), volcanic matter is still found.

From the summit of the hill of Frascati, the view is most grand and extensive. The eye, resting for a moment on the towers and cupolas of Rome, and, more than all, on the great dome of St. Peter's, wanders far over the wide plain of the Campagna, to the purple heights of Mount Ciminus and Soracte, on the north; to the Sabine Hills, backed by

* Excavations have been carried on to such an extent at Pompeii since the authoress visited it, that many larger streets and buildings may probably have been brought to light.

† Upwards of 170 feet.

the lofty Apennines, on the east; and to the blue waters of the Mediterranean, which bound the prospect, on the west.

On our left, immediately above us, rose the wood-covered height of Monte Cavo, towering in majesty to the skies. Far beneath us, on the right, the little lake of Gabii, where stood the ancient city of that name, attracted the eye by its gleaming waters; so totally destitute of banks, that it looked like a looking-glass lying on the ground.

In descending, we stopped at the Ruffinella. Lucien Buonaparte has bestowed much money, but little taste, in its embellishment. Ancient ilex, the growth of ages, have been lopped into skeleton trees, and are interspersed with little parterres, newly made, embroidered with the names of Homer, Virgil, Racine, &c., planted in box, and framed in the same! The statue of Apollo has been stuck up amongst them, as if this ingenious device had been inspired by that god himself. There is no want of bad busts and modern statues, clipped hedges, and formal grass walks. Forlorn dirty offices meet the eye; the slovenly, neglected appearance of everything gives this princely villa an air of utter wretchedness; and we look in vain for flowers or shrubs, for bloom or fragrance, for nature or beauty.

The chapel in the interior is pretty, and contains three tolerable paintings by Carlo Maratti,—a monument, erected by Prince Lucien to his first wife, who died at the age of twenty-six; another to his son, who died in the prime of youth; and a third to his own and Napoleon's father, who was born at Corsica, and died at Montpelier, at the age of thirty-six, and who, judging from his bust, must have had an uncommonly fine commanding countenance.

In the little town of Frascati, we saw the tomb of Lucullus, a name which tradition alone has given. Once it has been a magnificent building, but now it serves for a pig-stye. The exterior is nearly destroyed, and two dirty houses are built against it.

I forgot to mention, in their proper place, the *Centroni di Lucullo*, as the country people call some curious and very extensive substructions, in the form of an oblong square, which *Centroni* they maintain to have been the cellars of

that great epicurean's villa. Their extent, indeed, enormous as it is (and by pacing, the gentlemen of our party computed it to be about 450 feet in length), would scarcely be disproportioned to that of a villa, which, according to Pliny,* covered whole acres, and "made land scarce."

According to some accounts, Frascati was the real birthplace of Metastasio.

In the cathedral,—a paltry structure,—is a paltry monument to Cardinal York, the last of the Stuarts, who was cardinal bishop of this diocese; and another to Prince Charles Edward, the Pretender.

The inscription, which is sufficiently simple, you may perhaps like to see. It is as follows:—

"Hic situs est Carolus Odoardus cui Pater Jacobus III. Rex Angliæ, Scotiæ, Franciæ, Hiberniæ, Primus Natorum, paterni Juris et regiæ dignitatis successor et hæres, qui domicilio sibi Romæ delecto Comes Albaniensis dictus est.

"Vixit Annos LVII et mensem; decessit in Pace.—Pridie Kal. Feb. Anno MDCCLXXXVII."

It was not over the dust of the last of this ill-fated race, that we could recal to mind their errors; pity for their misfortunes could not fail to find its way to our hearts; yet we could not but reflect, that had they sat on the throne of their fathers, and their royal tomb arisen in the land of their birth, we might now have had cause to mourn for the wrongs and liberties of our country, instead of the misfortunes of her expelled kings.

* Pliny, lib. iv, cap. 6.

LETTER XCI.

Grotta Ferrata—Cicero's Villa—Domenichino's Frescos—Marino.

Nothing can exceed the beauty of the drive from Frascati to Albano; for nine miles we continue to pass through a varied succession of the most romantic and picturesque scenery. We first drove through the grounds of the Villa Giustiniani, and along a road shaded with umbrageous woods of oak and ilex, to the church and convent of Grotta Ferrata, one of the supposed sites of Cicero's Tusculan Villa. The situation is delightful; the ancient trees and soft verdant meadows around it, almost reminded me of some of the loveliest scenes of England; and the little brook "that babbles by," was not the less interesting, from the thought that its murmurs might, perchance, have once soothed the ear of Cicero. It is now called the Marana, but is generally thought to be the *Aqua Crabra*, which he celebrates. Certainly this rivulet affords a strong presumption that it is the true site of Cicero's Villa. He would scarcely have described it as he does, had it been two miles off. Some remarkable pieces of sculpture are said to have been discovered here, which answer to descriptions he gives in his letters of the ornaments of his villa—particularly a Hermathene, or united statue of Mercury and Minerva—and a table supported by images of the Gods. A headless bust inscribed with his name was also dug up here; and a medal with a head of Cicero, in fine preservation, is also said to have been found here. Two small bas-reliefs, which are placed in the adjacent episcopal palace,* are still to be

* The same palace formerly inhabited by Cardinal York, which at the time of our visit, was in the possession of Cardinal Gonsalvo, the then Bishop of Frascati.

Cicero at his Villa.

seen. One represents a young philosopher, sitting with a scroll in his hand; the other (a strange subject), martial figures, supporting legs of a semi-colossal size.

But so numerous and thickly set were the villas of the Romans at Tusculum in all ages of the republic and empire, that perhaps fancy alone could lead us to suppose it possible now to trace the vestiges or the site of the only one which excites our interest—the Villa of Cicero; and the spot we view with veneration as consecrated by his genius, may have been the retreat of the infamous Agrippina.*

The convent of Greek Basilian monks at Grotta Ferrata was founded by a St. Nilo, or Nilus, in the tenth century, and if there was anything so heathenish as a vestige of Cicero's Villa at that time, no doubt he would piously sweep it all away. But the loss of the ruins of Cicero's Villa did not give me half so much pain as the sight of the ruins of Domenichino's eighteen frescos, which are mouldering on the mildewed walls of the musty old chapels of the saints, and are already so destroyed that the next generation will probably never behold them. Yet there is one of them (the Demoniac Boy) which is beyond all comparison the finest of his works,—not even, I think, excepting the Communion of St. Jerome; nor do I know any painting in the world that surpasses it, except some of Raphael's. You will remember that the subject is the same that forms the lower and principal picture of the Transfiguration; but Domenichino has avoided all approach to it, as completely as if he had never seen the work of his great predecessor. The poor possessed boy,—the touching agony expressed in his twisted muscles and distorted features,—his upturned eyes, his gasping mouth, his convulsed limbs, and his whole figure, struggling in the arms of his afflicted father, perhaps equal, —and, if I may be allowed to say so, surpass—the Demoniac of Raphael. In other respects, the composition is less learned and complicated. There are fewer figures,—consequently not the same room for the masterly variety, and contrast of forms, expression, and attitude, that excite never-ending admiration, in the crowd without confusion

* Agrippina had a splendid villa here. Tacitus, Ann. lib. xiv. cap. 3.

that fills the canvas of Raphael. But the few figures that Domenichino has introduced, perhaps possess, from that very circumstance, a deeper interest, and an expression that takes more forcible hold on the mind. The saint, whose finger is pressed on the lip of the poor sufferer, while his other hand reaches the sacred oil that is to work the cure, is strikingly fine; and the earnest attention of the two little boys looking on, is nature itself. But the mother kneeling, watching in breathless suspense the fate of her child, as if life hung upon its gasp,—the whole expression, countenance, attitude, and drapery of this figure, are a masterpiece of perfection, and may well stand a comparison with the female in the Transfiguration.

The next in merit of these frescos, is the visit of the emperor to this convent, and his reception by St. Nilus,—with all the pomps of attendants and horses; a splendid composition, full of spirit and life. In the youth who is retreating from an unruly horse, Domenichino is said to have painted the portrait of the young woman of Frascati with whom he was in love, but who was refused him by her parents. St. Nilus is also the portrait of one of the monks, a friend of Domenichino's.

The next fresco represents a miracle which took place at the building of the very chapel in which we are standing. We behold the fall of a column upon the affrighted people, in consequence of the ropes breaking by which the workmen were raising it; but it luckily happens that St. Bartholomew is looking at the plan of the building at the moment, and, therefore, one of his disciples miraculously saves the people's heads from being broken by propping up the falling column. This is an admirable production, but it is even more injured than the other.

Another fresco, but of somewhat inferior merit, represents St. Bartholomew, by his prayers, saving the harvest of his convent from destruction by rain. Another seems to represent the assembled monks, attended by a long funeral train, praying around the dead body of St. Nilus. In another, and one of the finest of the whole, the Virgin appears surrounded with angels and seraphim stooping from the clouds to present to the kneeling saints (Nilus and Bartho-

lomew) a golden apple. Of the rest, the subjects can now be scarcely traced.

At Marino—a pretty little town, most picturesquely situated on the summit of a rocky hill, overhanging a romantic woody dell—we stopped to see the churches, which, being Friday evening, were crowded with people. At one of them we saw—what I had rather not have seen—the Trinity by Guido—in which the Eternal Father is represented as a stupid-looking old man in a red cloak. In the cathedral we saw an injured but very fine painting of Guercino's St. Bartholomew ready to suffer Death—two ruffian executioners by his side. At another altar there is a painting of considerable but inferior merit, which seems to be only in part his work. It represents the martyrdom of St. Barnabas, who was roasted alive, and who is supposed throughout Italy to be the great protector from fire. A little penny print of this saint pasted on their cottage-doors, is esteemed by the Italian peasants a far surer guarantee against the injuries of the devouring element, than all the stamps of the fire-insurance offices amongst us.

Marino, anciently Ferentinum, was so called from the fountain of the Aqua Ferentinæ, the source of which is still shown in the Colonna gardens. A ruined building in the woods, which, unfortunately, the closing day forbade us to visit, we were assured, is the remains of the Temple of Ferentina.

Pursuing our way, we walked down the steep hill into the romantic dell below, the carriages following. At the bottom, the bridge crossing the brawling stream; the rocks overhanging it, shaded by drooping plants; the ruined ivy-covered Gothic tower, rising far above the deep thick woods of oak and ilex; and the bright verdure of the gay meadows; formed one of the most delightful scenes I ever beheld,—admirably calculated for painting. In the foreground was the road winding abruptly round, and at one corner, a fountain and large reservoir, at which the country women, in the most picturesque dresses imaginable, were washing and beating their clothes, talking and laughing with a hilarity that was quite new to us, after being so many months shut up with the sombre Romans. We proceeded

along this beautiful woody dell, with Monte Cavo towering above us, till we came at once into full view of the Lake of Albano, and beheld the deep clear basin of its waters, the bright verdure of its sloping banks, the rich foliage of the chesnut-trees, contrasting with the dark cyprus and ilex, and the glowing tints of the evening sky, which assumed every varying hue as we continued to wind along above the lake. Passing Castel Gandolfo, the summer residence of the Pope, we entered Albano by an avenue of noble ilex trees, two miles in length.

LETTER XCII.

ANTIQUITIES OF ALBANO — THE EMISSARIUM OF THE ALBAN LAKE—THE NYMPHÆUM OF DOMITIAN—RUINS OF DOMITIAN'S VILLA—TOMB OF ASCANIUS—TOMB OF POMPEY—ALBA LONGA—ANTEDILUVIAN VASES.

THERE is no antiquity in the world more remarkable than the great Emissarium, or outlet of the Alban Lake. It was made nearly four hundred years before the Christian era, when Rome was an infant state. It is a tunnel a mile and a half in length, bored through the mountain of Albano, for the most part through the solid rock, and built of solid mason-work. It was done to carry off the waters of the lake, which, without any apparent cause, had suddenly overflowed their banks, and then risen to such a height as to threaten Rome itself, and the whole plain of Latium, with inundation. This happened during the long-protracted siege of Veii. Messengers were sent to consult the Delphic oracle, who brought back for answer, that Rome would never be safe, nor Veii taken, till the waters of the Alban Lake were made to flow to the sea. A Veian prophet and prisoner had previously announced the same fiat. Inspired at once by fear and hope, this wonderful work, which seemed to require a degree of skill and science far beyond that early age, was, in the same year, begun and ended; and so executed, that it would shame this degenerate age. After a lapse of twenty-two centuries, we find it still answering its original purpose, as if only built yesterday, and behold the waters of the Alban Lake still flowing through it, as they did in the days of Camillus. The channel is six feet in height, by three and a half in breadth. Three men only could have laboured in it once; and it is calculated that by three men (beginning at each end) the most unremitting perseverence would not have brought it to a conclusion during at least three years. How it was finished

in one, is the question. Piranesi supposes that they bored pits in several places through the mountain, down to the proper level, and let men down to continue the works, just as tunnels are excavated at the present time; and it is curious to think, if such was the case, that the ancient Roman (or more properly Etruscan) system of engineering should have descended down to us, even to the present day. Be this as it may, we cannot otherwise now understand the rapidity with which it was executed; we can only admire the perfection and durability of this grand piece of architecture, which is, perhaps, without exception, the most ancient and the most noble work of Roman times. The arch, which is still standing here, must convince the most sceptical, that the structure of the arch was known to the Romans at least four hundred years before the Christian era, and three hundred before the epoch at which certain connoisseurs have fixed its introduction. But if they shall still maintain that the polished Greeks, even while they raised those magnificent buildings that have been the sole models to succeeding ages and nations, were ignorant of this—one of the first principles of architecture;—if they shall still maintain, that, though practised during so many centuries by their rude neighbours, the Etruscans and Romans (with whom, too, they held constant intercourse), it was unknown to them, I shall certainly leave them in undisputed possession of their paradox.

In front of the channel of the Emissarium is an open chamber, or vestibule,—if I may call it so,—which is in some degree ruined; and the machines, works, &c., that were attached to it for regulating the flow of water, as well as those for the taking of fish, have, of course, long since vanished. On one side of the arch of the Emissarium, from amongst the immense blocks of stone which form the massive walls, an ilex tree—the largest I ever beheld, that almost seems coeval with the building itself—has wreathed its old fantastic roots, and stretching forth into four immense trunks, spreads its broad horizontal branches and luxuriant depth of shade over the whole court.

Not far from hence, along the shore of the lake, are some lofty artificial caves, or grottos, hollowed out in its rocky,

precipitous banks, called, by the country people, the *Bagni di Diana*, or *Grotto delle Ninfe*, which are supposed to be the remains of a Nymphæum built by Domitian.

A soft green sward, spotted with magnificent trees, gently slopes to the margin of the water; luxuriant ivy, hanging in wreaths nearly to the ground, shades its mouth, and a multitude of wild plants mingle their green pensile foliage from the rocks above. The natural grandeur of this immense cavern, the vaulted roof, the lofty arches, and long withdrawing recesses, partially seen within the deep shade of its interior; the sunny brightness of the rocks and trees, and romantic banks without; the woody height of Monte Cavo towering into the bright blue heavens, and reflected in the crystal mirror of the lake; the verdure and stillness and seclusion that breathe around, form one of the most enchanting scenes I ever beheld.

The ancient nymphæa were generally hollowed out like this in the sides of steep hills, and no place could be more happily chosen for this purpose than the cool margin of the Alban Lake. I have already noticed those delicious retreats of coolness and of shade, where the luxurious Romans, in the oppressive heats of summer, used to recline on marble seats, to breathe in stillness and repose, amidst their fresh flowing fountains, and to gaze on their limpid basins, which reflected the statues of the nymphs that were fabled to haunt them.

Virgil beautifully describes them:

> "Fronte sub adversa scopulis pendentibus antrum;
> Intus aquæ dulces, vivoque sedilia saxo;
> Nympharum domus."*

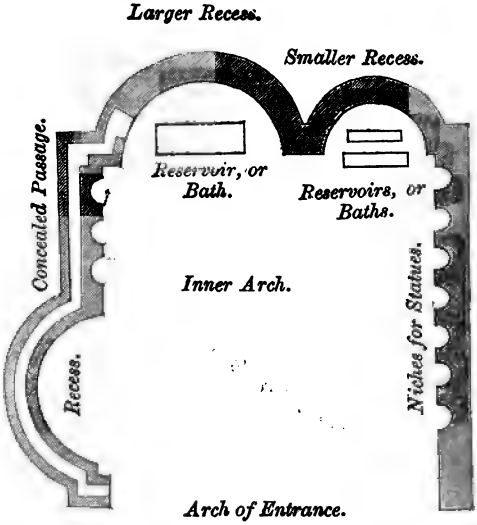
As the grottos on this lake, however, form, so far as I know, the only undoubted remains of an ancient nymphæum now left in the world, I shall give you a more particular account of them.† The entrance of the principal grotto is a wide and lofty arch of fine Roman brickwork, through which the sunbeams, playing amidst waving wreaths of ivy, break

* Æn. lib. i, ver. 167.

† An ancient mosaic picture of a Nymphæum was found on the Quirinal Hill, and formerly was in the Barberini Collection. There is an engraving of it in the Rom. Ant. tom. iv, p. 999.

beautifully on the caverned roof. On the left, on entering, is a large semicircular recess, or alcove; on the right, four niches for statues. Another arch, of the same span as the entrance, here crosses the grotto, and beyond it, on either side, are three niches for statues.

Opposite, at the far extremity of the grotto, two arches of unequal size divide the breadth into two alcoves, or recesses; the largest contains one reservoir which has much the appearance of a bath; the other has two smaller reservoirs, or baths, close to each other. Behind the wall on the left side, which contains the alcove and the three niches already mentioned, and between it and the rock, a narrow concealed passage runs along, and issues out in the large alcove at the farther extremity of the grotto. But a sketch of the plan, however clumsily drawn, will perhaps give you a clearer idea of it than my description.



The channels for the water to flow down the rock into the reservoirs are still distinctly visible, and the reservoirs are

yet more than half-filled with water. The irregularity of their size and that of the whole plan is singular, and the use of the concealed passage rather unaccountable. Perhaps the great recess at the side contained the statue of Diana, and the ten niches the statues of her nymphs. I should suppose this grotto to have been a natural one, but considerably enlarged by art. There is a smaller cave formed in the rock on each side of this, but no remains of building about either of them. The mouth of one of them is so choked up with trees and wild bushes, that it is difficult to discover it, and still more difficult to penetrate into it, which we did, without making any very notable discoveries in reward for the scratches we received.

These are by no means the only remains of the erections of Domitian at Albano. Among the extensive grounds of the Villa Barberini, near the town, on the hill above, are scattered many vestiges of his magnificent villa, which is said to have comprised the Villas of Clodius and of Pompey. The most curious of these are some long ranges of a *Crypto Portico*, by some thought a part of Clodius's "insane structures," as Cicero calls them.* Immense conduits for water, shattered walls, and other fragments of ancient buildings, are met with here and there overgrown with a profusion of ivy, half-lost in thickets of laurel, myrtle, and holly,—while ilex-trees, the growth of centuries, throw over them their impenetrable depth of shade.

The view from the terrace of this villa, which is supported on these ancient arches and substructions of Domitian's (perhaps, too, Clodius's) Villa, is in the highest degree striking and beautiful; but I resist the temptation of describing it, although the hills, the plains, the shores, were

* "Insanis molibus oppresserat."—*Cic. pro T. Ann. Milone.* It was impossible, amidst these hills and "sacred groves," not to remember Cicero's beautiful invocation to them, towards the close of the above unparalleled oration, or to raise our eyes to the majestic summit of that lofty mount, without being tempted to exclaim with him,—"Tuque ex tuo edito monte, Latialis sancte Jupiter, cujus ille lacus, nemora, finesque," &c.

At a place called Le Fratocchie, formerly Bovillæ, near the base of the Alban Mount, the murder of Clodius by Milo is supposed to have taken place.

replete with a thousand classic remembrances; and far over the blue waters of the Mediterranean, which bathes the long line of coast, my eye was caught by the Island of Ponza, the ancient abode of illustrious Roman exiles.

At the Convent of St. Paul, are some walls built of large square blocks of stone, supposed to have formed part of Domitian's Prætorian Camp; and in the gardens of the convent are some ruins of an amphitheatre.

In a vineyard, called, I think, the *Vigna Marzelli*, formerly belonging to the Jesuits, are some trifling remains of an aqueduct, and of a building called the Tomb of Tullia.

The ruins called the *Celle Maje*, obviously *Cellæ Magni*—or *halls of the Great* [Pompey], must have been remains of his villa.

We also observed a church which seems to have been an ancient circular building—probably the Rotunda to some Thermæ.

At either end of the town of Albano, an ancient tomb excites the attention of the traveller. That which stands a little on the left of the road, on entering Albano from Rome, is a high pyramidal structure, once covered with marble and adorned with three orders of marble columns, but now entirely despoiled: it is called the Tomb of Ascanius. The other, at the southern extremity of the town, and on the road to Naples, is a square edifice of immense solidity, built of large blocks of stone, and crowned with five small pyramids, of which two only are now entire. This is called the Tomb of the Horatii and Curiatii, the five pyramids being thought to commemorate the five slaughtered combatants; and accordingly an inscription, placed upon it by a modern Roman family, asserts the fact. But Livy tells us, the scene of that memorable combat was at the *Fossa Cluilia*, the spot where Hannibal afterwards encamped, supposed to be on the Via Latina, beside the reputed temple of Fortuna Muliebris; and certainly within five miles of Rome;* and as the five fallen combatants were interred on the field of battle, it is vain to look for their tomb here.

By others, this sepulchre is denominated the Tomb of

* Livy, lib. i, c. 23; lib. ii, c. 39. Livy also states that Hannibal afterwards encamped upon the same spot.

Pompey, whose ashes, according to Plutarch, were brought from Egypt by Cornelia. According to Pliny, Strabo, and many ancient authors, he was buried at Mount Casius, in Egypt.* According to a third supposition, it is a cenotaph erected to his memory; and, in either case, the five pyramids are supposed to commemorate the five victories he gained before his first consulship. Plutarch also tells us, that the family mausoleum of Pompey was at Alba Longa, but we have no reason to imagine this to be it. The fact is, that this ancient sepulchre, as well as 'the Tomb of Ascanius,' is unknown, and busy conjecture has supplied the place of history.

According to Dionysius Halicarnassus, the ancient city of Alba Longa was between the Alban Mount and the sea. Any of the antiquaries will show you the exact site, and you may choose out of the variety you will see, if you apply to them all. There is not, of course, a single vestige of it.

A great deal of noise was made about some cinerary urns of terra-cotta, which were dug up near Castel Gandolfo, and which we were gravely assured last winter, were antediluvian, and had been deposited in that spot before the Deluge! Several treatises of great length and learning were written to prove this, and it was established in the most satisfactory manner, till suddenly, to the confusion of the antediluvians, they proved to be Gothic! Some foreigners (in their right senses) brought indisputable evidence of urns, so precisely similar, having been found in Prussia, and various parts of Germany, in Sweden, Denmark, and England, that even the antediluvians were compelled to admit the truth. What can we think of the sanity of a set of archeological Academicians, that gravely pronounced some clay urns to be antediluvian!

I ought to have told you that this notion was put into their heads, in consequence of finding the urns, as was pretended, under a stratum of tufo. If this was true, the stone might have been subsequently formed without being antediluvian. Modern geological discoveries prove not only the possibility, but frequency of such formations.

* Pliny, lib. xii.

LETTER XCIII.

ASCENT OF THE ALBAN MOUNT—CAMP OF HANNIBAL—TRIUMPHAL WAY—CONVENT OF FRIARS—VOLCANOS—LAKE OF NEMI—ARICIA—CIVITA LAVINIA—CORA—TEMPLE OF HERCULES—CYCLOPEAN WALLS.

IF I could, by description, convey to you any part of the pleasure I myself enjoyed in our expedition to the top of Monte Cavo, I would give it to you at large; but as mere words can never paint the varied beauty of such scenery, I shall be as sparing of them as possible.

After breakfast, on a beautiful May morning, at the door of the inn we mounted our donkeys, which carried us all with great ease and safety, although the long legs of some of the gentlemen nearly touched the ground. We passed the Capuchin convent, the terrace of which—forbidden to women—commands a most beautiful prospect, and then, turning along the banks of the lake, wound through magnificent woods and thick copses of oak, chesnut, and hazel, looking down into the deep crystal basin below, and above to the towering summit of the classic mountain, whose sylvan sides we were ascending. I observed some ancient broken conduits for water here and there in the ground on our right. Amidst the trees appeared a rustic chapel to the Madonna. She is called *La Madonna del Tufo*, because she was found under the tufo or soft volcanic stone. Like the vases, I wonder they did not make her out to be an antediluvian Madonna. But she is a very miraculous Madonna; and I am assured the day never passes without her working some miracle, more especially in the curing of cows, for which she is highly famed. We soon passed Palazzuola (the most favourite site for Alba Longa), which is now a villa of the

Colonna family, with another convent of Franciscans attached to it. Near it, by the road-side, are some immense caverns, supported by pillars of rock, said be natural, but evidently much enlarged by art. The wide arches of the rocky roof, the long perspective of the interior, indistinctly seen in distance, dividing into remote passages and crossing arches, had a singularly fine effect beneath the hanging rocks and ancient trees that bend over them. The country people call them the Grottos of Ascanius, and a tomb, a little farther along, they call the Tomb of Ascanius, not satisfied with the one he has already got possession of at Albano. But as Ascanius was not a Roman consul, and as this tomb has twelve consular fasces, with the axes, it must have been the tomb of a consul, and consequently not his. It has also a Roman eagle and a globe resting on a sceptre, sculptured upon it, so that it would seem to have been the tomb of an emperor. Some, however, think that it was an habitation for the living, not for the dead; a part of the Consular House, where the Roman consuls slept during the celebration of the *Feriæ Latinæ*, which the deputies of forty-seven cities attended. This solemnity, in latter times, lasted four days; and if any informality or omission had taken place in the ceremony, the whole was recommenced from the beginning. The principal magistrates of all the cities of Latium assembled for this purpose, and, led by the Roman consul, ascended in solemn procession to the Temple of Jupiter Latialis, where they offered the sacrifice of an ox, of which every one carried away a portion. States at war with each other desisted from hostilities during this holy "truce of God;" and every treaty or engagement was here solemnly ratified in the sacred presence of their Supreme Deity.

Still ascending through the woods, we at length emerged from them at the village of Rocca di Papa, anciently *Forum Populi*, which hangs over the lake on a steep shelving ledge of bare rock that terminates in a fine point, crowned with tufted ilex. We scrambled through this almost perpendicular village, on our feet, the poor asses being here scarcely able to pull themselves up, and were much pleased with the appearance of the people, who seem a much hardier, more industrious and contented race than those of the plain.

The women, decently and most picturesquely dressed, were sitting twirling the spindle at their cottage-doors; and, strange to tell, they did not beg! The children, too, had generally shoes and stockings; a change I had also observed at Frascati and Albano.

The soft green sloping lawns above the village, which we next passed through, are called *I Prati d' Annibale;* and the tradition is still told, that the Carthaginian pitched his camp here, and looked down upon the city he meant to subdue. There is nothing improbable in the tale: for, from the account Livy gives of Hannibal's route, both on his way from Campania, when he vainly summoned Tusculum to surrender, and back again, after his unsuccessful bravado at the gates of Rome, it is plain he passed over these hills.* Previous to this, on his way to Capua, immediately after the fatal battle of Cannæ, it would seem he made a halt upon the mountains near Rome.†

We now began to ascend the last and steepest part of the mountain, through thick woods of chesnut, and soon joined the ancient Via Triumphalis, which is paved in the usual way with large irregular shaped stones closely fitted together, and forming a flat surface. It has the letters V and N in many places still engraved upon it. The road is in high preservation, about the same breadth as the streets of Pompeii, and like them marked with the wheels of the cars or carriages. In this case, however, it could not be the track of the triumphal cars, for the lesser triumph only, the ovation, was celebrated here, when the victor walked on foot. Pope Alexander VII, indeed, was drawn up it in triumph in a carriage!

The summit of the mountain is covered with soft green turf, perhaps one-fourth of a mile in circumference, the centre of which is occupied, not by the proud temple of Jupiter Latialis, but by a convent of Passionist Friars, built on its substructions; and some large blocks of stone, which form the only remains of it, are set up to form a slovenly fence for their weed-covered garden, which they are

* Livy, lib. xxvi, cap. 10.

† "In propinquis urbis montibus moratus est."—Corn. Nepos, in Hannibal.

too lazy even to cultivate. These good fathers were, luckily for us, at dinner when we arrived, and well knowing we should obtain no admittance with their consent, we stole in at the open door, and proceeded straight up to the very top of the convent, from whence we enjoyed one of the most beautiful, extended, and classic prospects in the world. All Latium lay like a map beneath our feet; the regions far to the south, which, in returning from Naples, we had seemed to leave behind for ever, were once more revealed to our view. From the rocky cliffs of Anxur washed by the waves, where fancy, even at this distance, almost seemed to give to our sight the ruined temples we had visited on its height; along the low marshy waste of the Pontine Marshes, bounded on one side by the range of the Volscian Hills, on the other by the blue line of the Mediterranean, whose waters encircled the lofty promontory of Circe, and bathed the depopulated walls of Antium, Lavinium, and Laurentium; we gazed upon towns and villages, and mountains, famed in early history and in classic song; upon the very field of all the battles in the Æneid, where Turnus and Æneas had fought, and

"The swift Camilla scoured along the plain;"

—upon the ancient Tiber, winding its silent course through the deserted Campagna, and encircling, in a last embrace, the Insula Sacra, before its waters mingled with the ocean; —upon Rome, with the stupendous ruins of the Colosseum, and the proud dome of St. Peter's;—upon the northern heights of Mount Ciminus and Soracte, that seemed to shut us from the land of our birth;—and upon the range of the Sabine Hills, and the lofty summits of the Apennines, that in proud and embattled grandeur rose up into the heavens, as if to fence in the classic plains of Italy. The very spot on which we stood, at the summit of the mountain, was the same from whence Juno surveyed the two contending armies, previous to the last combat of the Æneid, and addressed her angry complaints to Juturna, the goddess of the lake below, the transformed sister of the unfortunate Turnus.

At Juno, e summo, qui nunc Albanus habetur,
Tum neque nomen erat, nec honos aut gloria monti,
Prospiciens tumulo, campum adspectabat, et ambas
Laurentum Troümque acies, urbemque Latini.
Extemplo Turni sic est affata sororem,
Diva deam, stagnis quæ, fluminibusque sororis,
Præsidet, &c. &c. Æn. lib. xii, v. 134.

We were disturbed from the enjoyment of tracing, in this delightful prospect, a thousand spots which our early studies had made almost as interesting to us as the very recollections of our childhood, by the approach of the fat old friars, who came puffing and blowing up the stairs, in grievous horror and perturbation, caused by hearing of our daring profanation of their holy premises, and who, at the sight of a party of young ladies, in actual possession of the very heights of the convent, commenced an outcry such as it was hardly possible to hear with gravity. Doubtless their rage and despair were exceedingly increased by the thought of the smoking viands they had left in the refectory below. They are a convent of Penitents; and, to judge from their appearance, eating and drinking must be to them a great penance, and one they practise most rigorously, for they are twelve as fat friars as ever wore a cowl,—more especially the one whose superior authority was denoted by his superior corpulency, and who continued to vociferate in alternate tones of anger, lamentation, menace, and supplication, his desire for us to depart. At last we did so, and our parting donation, I believe, almost reconciled them to our trespass.

It is impossible to look down from this height, into the basin of the Alban Lake, deep sunk within its high and shelving banks, without feeling impressed with the popular belief that it has once been the crater of a volcano. Its form is circular, its circumference is not more than five miles; and the hills, the rocks, the plains, the very crust of the earth all around, are so evidently composed of volcanic matter, that this conviction is irresistibly impressed on our minds. The *Prati d' Annibale*,—the green meadows where Hannibal was encamped,—are generally thought to have been the last mouth of the flaming volcano; and all around

the village of Rocca di Papa, we observed great masses of lava, and other volcanic stones, precisely similar to many of the specimens we brought from Mount Vesuvius. It is curious, if this spot was once the reservoir of fire, that it is now that of snow. Rome is supplied with ice from hence, and it is kept here in pits of fifty feet in depth, with a drain at the bottom.

The beautiful little Lake of Nemi, a few miles further to the south, which we had visited on the road to Naples, by all the vulgar, and most of the scientific, is believed to have been once a crater. It is still smaller in circumference—still more deeply sunk in woody banks than that of Albano. So deep, indeed, is the gulf, and so small the aperture, that it is said even the stormy winds have no power to ruffle its calm basin, and the poets, therefore, called it the *Speculum Dianæ*. Near this beautiful looking-glass, the goddess had her celebrated temple. The high priest was called *Rex Nemorensis*, and was always a fugitive slave, who had obtained his office by killing his predecessor in single combat, and who held it by the tenure of fighting all the candidates that aspired to it. The Capuchin convent here, which commands one of the most heavenly prospects I ever beheld, is supposed to stand on the hill and grove of Virbius.* An ancient circular tower, one hundred and twenty feet in height, called the *Torre di Diana*, built on a rock projecting over the lake, has a strikingly picturesque effect, and the old castle of the Duca di Braschi beneath it is the very scene for a story of romance.

An ancient Roman ship was found under water in this lake, in the fifteenth century, which is called by Di Marchi,

* Where, after Hippolytus had been murdered and brought back to life,—

"Pæoniis revocatum herbis, et amore Dianæ,"

and Father Jupiter, in a passion, had sent old Æsculapius to the Stygian waves for his pains, he was concealed by Diana—

"At Trivia Hippolytum secretis alma recondit
Sedibus, et nymphæ Egeriæ nemorique relegat;
Solus ubi in silvis Italis ignobilis ævum
Exigeret, versoque ubi nomine Virbius esset."

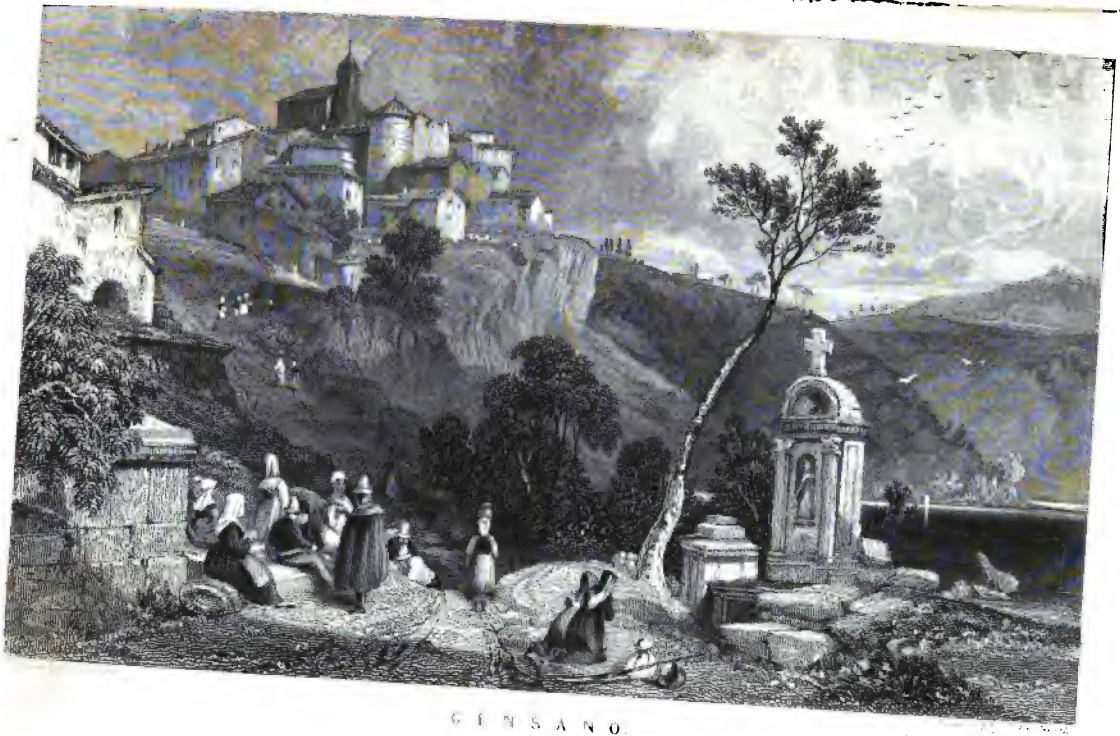
Æn. lib. vii, v. 774.

'the bark of Trajan,' though the leaden pipes were inscribed with the name of Tiberius. It is minutely described by Pope Pius II., in the second book of his Commentaries. It seems to have been a sort of floating summer villa for the Emperor, and to have been fitted up with astonishing splendour; yet still it did not approach to the immensity and magnificence of the bark of Hiero of Syracuse, which contained halls paved with mosaic, baths, theatres, and temples; nay, even gardens and aqueducts.

Upon the Lake of Nemi is the pretty little town of Gensano, the name of which far-fetching etymologists derive from *Cynthianum*,* or the fane of Cynthia. Between Gensano and Albano is La Riccia, or Aricia, where Horace slept the first night of his journey to Brundusium. The Via Appia, which crosses the valley below the town, is supported by an immense mole, with arches, a truly Roman work, and well worth seeing, although it is generally passed unnoticed. It is necessary to descend into the valley in order to have a good view of it, for from above, it is so overgrown with wild plants, that nothing is discernible, and you may travel along it without discovering it. This beautiful valley,—the *Val' Aricia*, is the far-famed spot where the nymph Egeria retired to mourn for Numa, and where, changed into a fountain, her murmurs still tell to the woods her grief. The fountain of Egeria, or *Fonte Gerulo*, as it is now called, rushes forth such a powerful and impetuous torrent, that it immediately turns mills.

From La Riccia we made an excursion to Civita Lavinia, the Lanuvium of republican days, and passed on the right the ruins of the famous Temple of Juno Lanuvina, or Argiva; so at least it was conjectured, because the statue of the goddess was found here, whose rites were celebrated with almost as much secrecy as those of the Bona Dea, or the Eleusinian mysteries. We were, however, assured that these ruins were a part of the *Palace of Evander!* At Civita Lavinia we saw a ring, to which we were gravely informed that Æneas had moored his ship! But the La-

* Corrupted into *Gensanum, Gensano.* It may be observed that nearly all the Italian nouns, whether proper or common, are taken from the ablative of the Latin noun.



CENSANO.

vinium of Æneas is supposed by the learned to have been at a place now called Santa Petronilla, about eight miles north of Nettuno, (the ancient Antium,) at the source of the Numicus,—or what they call the Numicus, which runs into the sea after a course of three miles. We saw some ancient Cyclopean walls at Civita Lavinia; but the Cyclopean walls at Cora are far more perfect and entire. In our journey to Naples, we made an excursion from Velletri,* over the Volscian Hills, to that ancient city. Cisterna would have been a much nearer point to Cora, but there we could not procure donkeys; and our pilgrimage of four-and-twenty mortal miles on the backs of these slow animals, which occupied us from the dawn of day to the fall of night, through untracked woods and wilds, was not unattended with fatigue, and even peril; these hills being the notorious haunt of banditti, and Cora itself one of the chief places of their abode. Luckily, however, we accomplished it in safety, and persuaded ourselves that the sight of its antiquities was a sufficient recompense. The most striking of these are the remains of the Temple of Hercules. The ancient Doric portico, with its whole entablature, is entire. It has four Doric columns in front, which sustain the simple and beautiful frieze and pediment. Its architecture was much admired by Raphael, who studied it with great attention at the time he was employed in the building of St. Peter's at Rome.

This beautiful portico stands in a singularly fine situation, upon a ledge, or platform, supported by an ancient wall, on which the laurels and cypress, the rocks and wild-springing aloes, form a fine foreground. Even the old tower of the church, rising behind it, adds to the picturesque effect.

In this church, we saw a beautiful Pagan altar found here, sculptured with rams' heads and wreaths of flowers,

* At Velletri I was amused to see how all the Velletrians,—even the dirty *camerieri* of our beggarly inn, piqued themselves upon Augustus having been a native of their town,—not that this was really the case, for he was only nursed there. Suetonius (Augustus, 5) expressly says, that Augustus was born at Rome, in the ward of the Palatium, at the sign of the Ox-heads, where an Ædicola was afterwards dedicated to him. The good people of Velletri, however, have actually got his head stuck up for a sign-post at a public-house.

and a noble ancient vase, which serves for a baptismal font. In the walls of this church there is a blocked-up doorway; above which I observed the following inscription:—

M. MANLIUS M. F . . . . LIVR.
FILIUS D. DUOMVIRES
PASINASUS . . . . ENTE AEDEM.
FACIENDAM COLA VERUNTE
IODAMQUE PROLAXERA.*

It is curious that the name of this man should be M. Manlius, for none of the family of Manlius were ever allowed to bear the name of Marcus, after the death of Capitolinus; and I do not remember that there was any other family of that name of any note. In another part of the town, and at another church, are the remains of the Temple of Castor and Pollux, which chiefly consist of two noble Corinthian columns, and a fragment of the frieze, on which is inscribed,—

M. CASTORE POLLUCIDE, C. S. FAC . . . .
M. CALVIUS. M . . . . P. N.

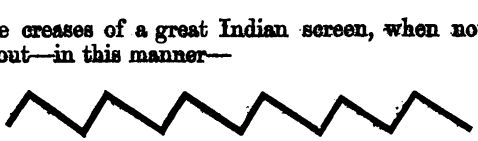
In the court of a house are two small Doric pillars, said to have belonged to the Temple of Diana. But the most curious of the antiquities at Cora are the Cyclopean Walls, of which there are very extensive remains. They are of immense solidity, at least thirty feet in height, and built of enormous irregular-shaped stones, set up like flags, with their smooth flat expanse outwards, and fitted to each other with the greatest nicety, but without any cement. They really look as if they had been hammered together by the labour of the Cyclops. It has been justly remarked, that they most resemble the ancient pavement of the Via Appia, or the streets of Pompeii, set up vertically.†

One of the most striking peculiarities in these Cyclopean walls—and one that, as far as I know, has never yet been noticed, is that they are built in continual angles, something

* The marks in this inscription I have made to signify obliterated letters.

† Vide Winkelman sur l'Architecture.

like the creases of a great Indian screen, when not much drawn out—in this manner—



There is a very curious ancient bridge, too, called the Ponte di Catena, built in the same Cyclopean mode of construction, but, of course, not in these angles. Vitruvius, in speaking of these very walls of Cora, calls this extraordinary style of building, 'antiquum,' and 'incertum,' but throws no light upon its origin. 'Dubious' it must still continue to be. There is no account more satisfactory in Winkelman, or any other author of it; and, excepting that it is of the highest antiquity, nothing respecting it seems to be known. One writer (Father Volpi), attributes it to the Goths; but more enlightened critics will recognize these Cyclopean walls as works of a very ancient period.

On Trajan's column, an ancient city is represented, with walls of this construction; and remains of it are found in several parts of Greece, and in many of the ancient towns near Rome, which, like Cora, boast a Greek origin. At the ruins of a city among the Volscian Hills, about five miles from hence, called Civita Penatoria, and which I believe was anciently called Alatri;* at Fondi, in the kingdom of Naples, where we also saw them; at Civita Lavinia, and at Palestrina, vestiges of them still stand.

Circumstances, over which I have no control, have prevented me from visiting Palestrina, so that I can give you no account of the Cyclopean walls there—nor yet favour you with my opinion, in addition to the numbers already given, on the subject of the famous mosaic of the Temple of Fortune, which is preserved in a palace there, to perplex the heads of antiquaries and cognoscenti. These are misfortunes which probably you will not lament very deeply, neither do I; but Palestrina was the ancient Prænestè,—therefore I should have liked to have seen it; though of Prænestè there are now no remains. Even of the celebrated

* Alatri was one of the five Saturnian cities. The names of the others are Anagni, Atina, Arce, and Arpino.

temple of "that most fortunate of Fortunes," as Carneades the Athenian, from its surpassing magnificence, called the Fortune of Prænestе,—there is not now one stone left upon another, though the platform on which it stood can still be distinctly traced.

At the Church of La Madonna della Villa (so called from the ruins of a Roman imperial villa on which it was built), in the town of Palestrina, I am assured that considerable remains of porticos, halls, baths, and corridors, can still be traced. At a place called Volmontone, about five miles from the town, there is a great hall painted in fresco, by Gaspar Poussin, said to be one of his finest works. But at Genezzano, about six miles from Palestrina, there is an object much more visited,—a far-famed miraculous Madonna who, in emulation of the renowned Virgin of Loretto, *flew* there, all the way from Albania,—not, however, bringing her house along with her. But, in other respects, her exploits, if I had time to narrate them, do by no means fall short of hers of Loretto. Many are the pilgrims, among whom may be reckoned crowned heads even of this generation, who have come from distant countries to visit the shrine of this flying Virgin of Genezzano. The nuts and roses, for which Prænestе was famous in Roman days, I am assured still abound there.

LETTER XCIV.

FRASCATI—BANDITTI.

CONSTERNATION fills this little peaceful town. Yesterday evening Lucien Bonaparte's villa was entered by a gang of banditti;—but I must tell you the story in order as it happened.

About four in the afternoon *Monsignore* (as the old priest of the family is through courtesy called) set out to take his accustomed walk; and, unluckily for himself, directed his steps up the hill to the ruins of ancient Tusculum; when, suddenly, from the bushes which shade the cavity of the amphitheatre, two armed robbers sprung out, dragged him among the thickets, where four others were lying in ambush; and having stripped him of his watch, money, and clothes, they tied his hands behind his back, and gave him notice, that the first moment he attempted to speak, or make the smallest noise, would be the last of his life. They kept him prisoner there till after sunset, when they crept through the wood to the house, and made a halt among the thick laurels and shrubs close to it. In the meantime the dinner-bell rang, the family sat down to table; but as Monsignore was not to be found, a servant was sent into the pleasure-ground in search of him, who left the house-door unfastened. The banditti softly made their approaches. Five of them entered unseen and unheard, and the sixth staid to guard the door. Monsignore seized this moment to betake himself to his heels, and gained a remote out-house, where he buried himself overhead among straw, and was found many hours after more dead than alive.

In the meantime the five robbers, with their fire-arms presented, cautiously advanced into the house, but they were soon descried by the servants, whose shrieks they

stilled in a moment by the menace of instant death if they moved a step or uttered a sound. One maid-servant, however, escaped, and gave the alarm to the party in the dining-room, who all fled in different directions to conceal themselves, excepting the unfortunate secretary, who had previously left the room to inquire into the cause of the tumult, and was seized, on his way down stairs, by the robbers, who mistook him for the Prince; and, in spite of his protestations, was carried off, together with the head-butler, and a poor *facchino*,* whom they encountered on the grounds, to the mountain above Velletri, a distance of seven miles, without stopping.

This morning the captured *facchino*, like another Regulus, has been sent as ambassador, or *chargé d'affaires*, from the banditti to the Prince, to propose terms, which are, to deliver up their prisoners on the payment of a ransom of 4000 crowns; or, on the non-payment of it, within four-and-twenty hours, to shoot them. Lucien Bonaparte sent back one half of their demand in money, and an order on his banker for the rest. The robbers sent back the order, torn through the middle, with a further demand of 4000 crowns, in hard money, besides the 2000 they had already received under pain of the immediate death of their prisoners. The Prince received this insolent mandate in his palace at Rome, where he took refuge this morning, and has been obliged to obey it.

I wonder the government do not feel ashamed that such outrages should be perpetrated within ten miles of Rome, and that they should be obliged to admit delegates from banditti into the very seat of government—the capital itself. A detachment of troops, and about two hundred armed peasants, levied by Lucien Bonaparte, are ready for the pursuit of the villains, the moment their captives are released—but, till then, they dare not move; for the eyrie on which they have perched themselves commands a view of the whole country in every direction, and they have sworn to put the prisoners to death the moment they see the approach of an armed man.

The Pope's soldiers, indeed, it would seem, are not much

* Porter, or out-door labourer.

to be depended upon themselves, for it is not long since the guard from the Trinità de' Monti, and the Porta del Popolo, at Rome, walked off one fine moonlight night, with their arms and accoutrements, to the hills, and joined a party of banditti.

It was the intention of the banditti who entered Lucien Bonaparte's villa, to have seized both him and his daughter, who had been betrothed that very day to Prince Ercolani, a young Bolognese nobleman; and had they succeeded, their demands would have had no bounds.

Frascati, Nov. 19.

After a captivity of two days and a half, the prisoners returned, and the troops and armed peasantry instantly began the pursuit. The mountain on which they were stationed, it is said, was previously completely surrounded with guards, and every part of it has been searched,—an immense reward has been offered for the apprehension even of one of them,—but all in vain. No traces of them have been discovered; and Lucien Bonaparte, in addition to the ransom, has had to pay an immense sum to the peasantry he hired, without the satisfaction of bringing the offenders to justice.

The unfortunate secretary has been confined to bed ever since, partly from the effects of fright, fatigue, and cold, and partly from a wound he received in his forehead in the scuffle, when he was first taken prisoner. The captured butler, and *facchino*, whom I have seen, say that the robbers did not treat them ill, and gave them plenty of food; more, indeed, than they could eat; for it may be supposed that in such a situation their appetite could not be very keen. Neither could they enjoy much repose, surrounded with cocked carbines. The captain of those banditti, who was a remarkably little man, used to say to them, with great politeness, "We shall really be sorry to murder you, gentlemen; but if the Prince does not send the money we must do it—our *honour* is engaged."

They knew, indeed, too well, he would keep his word, for it is not long since a young woman was carried off between Velletri and Terracina, and the ransom they required not being paid, she was murdered, and her body left on the mountains.

Nor is this the only exploit of the sort in this neighbourhood. A few weeks ago, a Roman gentleman and his daughters were taking a walk after mass on a Sunday, close to the town of Palestrina, when a party of banditti rushed upon them, and carried them off to the mountains. The poor old man, who was asthmatic, and unable to keep pace with the rapidity of the flight, was brutally murdered before the eyes of his unfortunate daughters, whose ransom enriched these monsters with the wealth of the man they had slain.

About two months ago, a bride, on the day of her nuptials, was carried off from a villa near Albano, while sitting at table, surrounded by her husband and relations, and after passing a night on the mountain, she was liberated, on the payment of a heavy ransom, without insult or injury.

LETTER XCV.

BANDITTI.

Rome, February 4th, 1818.

You have been misinformed about our robbery. It is true, that about half an hour after sunset, and by the light of an early moon, the carriage was stopped by a ferocious looking party of brigands, who, armed to the teeth, and with cocked pistols held at our heads, demanded our money or our lives. But it is not true that they personally maltreated us. Our ears were not cut off, neither were we left without any clothes; and I must beg to assure you, whatever you may have heard to the contrary, that we were not murdered. Our assailants, who were four in number, or perhaps more (but four only appeared), were, indeed, by no means sparing in their threats to put an end to us, and flourished their glittering knives, and held their disagreeable pistols to our ears, with great perseverance; but this was done in order to frighten us into giving them all we had; for though I am convinced they would have had no more scruple in killing us than a butcher a sheep, or a sportsman a partridge, if they could have got a single ducat by it; yet, as that was not the case,—and as the mere abstract act of murdering a set of harmless people cannot afford any extraordinary gratification, they granted my reiterated prayer, (which W—— disdained to second,) to take our money and spare our lives; and we have good reason to bless ourselves in escaping out of the hands of these banditti with no injury except to our purses. Some gentlemen of our acquaintance have not been so fortunate, having been very roughly handled; but that I attribute entirely to their having had pistols, and not having had a lady to plead for them, and cajole the ruffians with her silvery tongue. However, I contrived to save a bag of gold,—the chief part of the money we had; but I was nearly murdered for diamonds which I had not. Lady ——, whose carriage these banditti were waylaying, and expected they had stopped, was known to

have jewels of immese value, having shown them imprudently on the journey. Her ladyship, however, unexpectedly stopped for the night at the last post on our journey, where she had vainly tried to induce us to remain also, in consequence of the alarm about banditti; and thus, having been mistaken for her, I became the victim, and was very nearly shot for not delivering up diamonds which I did not possess. Nay, I believe I should have been shot, but for an alarm we opportunely raised that the troops we had left behind at the last post were coming up.

We hear fresh accounts every day of captives carried off to the mountains by the banditti, and the most daring outrages practised with impunity. A party of them came down the other evening into the town of Terracina, took the postmaster out of his own house, and barbarously murdered him. They had, it seems, vowed vengeance against him, on account of the steps he had taken to bring them to justice.

A few days ago, Barbone, the noted chief who holds his reign in the woody fastnesses of Monte Algido,* in defiance of the powers of papal justice, and who, during four years, has been the terror of the whole country, after performing various recent achievements at the head of his band, went in open day alone into the town of Velletri, ordered, and ate an excellent dinner at the inn, drank the best wines, walked about with the utmost nonchalance, and talked about the very robberies he had been committing. He was, however, recognized at last; but strange to say, he made his escape, though slightly wounded in the leg by a shot.

The numerous bands of robbers which infest this country, by no means live either upon their depredations on travellers, or the ransom of their prisoners; their grand resource is the plunder of the farmers, particularly those who live among the hills, many of whom are extremely rich, not only in flocks and cattle, and such sort of rural property, but in money. The whole range of Volscian hills, which extend from the Alban Mount far into the kingdom of Naples, and branch off into various chains, stretching up to the Appennines, and through the heart of Calabria, are all infested

* Anciently Mount Algidum, a high and beautiful hill in the same chain as the Alban Mount, about twelve miles from Rome.

with banditti. The French would allow no robbers but themselves, and kept the country tolerably clear of them; but since they went away, they have increased and multiplied.*

The consequence of all the horrible outrages that have been practised during these nine months, has been, that the Secretary of State has gone in person to Terracina to hold a solemn conference with the brigand chiefs; has entered into a formal treaty with them, complied with their terms, and offered friendship, protection, and reward, to hands still dripping with innocent blood! In the name of His Holiness, a general proclamation has been issued, inviting all the banditti to surrender themselves, and engaging to pay them a certain sum per day, to maintain them at the public charge, and to furnish them with good accommodations in the Castle of St. Angelo, and after six months' *honourable* imprisonment to liberate them again!

This is a high premium for robbery and murder! And the more heinous the crimes they have committed, the higher is to be their reward! The chiefs get double as much as the rest. The way for a man to get a pension in Rome, seems to be to turn an assassin.

A considerable body of these banditti have already delivered themselves up upon the faith of this engagement, and are now living in clover at the Castle of St. Angelo. People flock to see them as if they were wild beasts. We went a few days ago, and I intend to repeat my visit, for their appearance and manners are beyond description interesting. We found them amusing themselves in a large open court, apparently enjoying the novelty of their situation, and the notice they attracted. They are a very fine

* The English completely rid Sicily of robbers, simply by making all proprietors, townships, &c. responsible for the robberies committed within their estate, or jurisdiction. The system they established is still persevered in; and, from being the most notorious country for robbery in the world, the crime is now unheard of. A man may now [1818] travel alone, and unguarded, all over the island of Sicily with a bag of money in his hand, in perfect safety. Several friends of ours, lately, though known to be remarkably well furnished with cash, made the whole tour, at different times, without fire-arms, and with only one attendant.

looking set of men,—fine limbs, fine features, fine flashing dark eyes and hair, and bright brown complexions. Their air and deportment is free and independent, expressing undaunted confidence and fearless resolution. But their countenance!—I can give you no idea of the sinister expression—the confirmed villany that many of them wore, especially when they talked and laughed.

Their dresses were very rich and picturesque. One of them had a magnificent embroidered scarf twisted round him, which he laughed as he said he had taken from a lady.

The captain boasted of having killed eighteen men with his own hand. His wife was with him: she is only nineteen, and really the most beautiful creature I think I ever beheld. Several people have made presents to these wretches, and more especially to this woman, a practice I must say I think highly reprehensible; and I am afraid the example was set by an English lady of high rank, the Duchess of Devonshire, who, as the patroness of learning, taste, and talent, I should have thought would scarcely have deigned to become the patroness of robbers.

Several of them had little images of the Virgin and the saints suspended round their necks. One of them took out his little Madonna, kissed it, and said he should never have had any success without it,—that it had often saved his life, and that whenever he wanted anything, he always prayed to it. Another, being asked what they would do when they were liberated, replied, with a face which it would be vain to describe,—"Oh, we shall repent!"—(*ci pentiremo.*) I wonder if the poor wretches who were executed on the guillotine the other day deserved it better than those who, in six months, are to be released with free pardons to prey on society again.*

The whole system of the government is marked by the same weakness and incapacity. It would be endless to enter into the minutiæ of the mal-administration which pervades every department; but, for example, the petty im-

* After my return from Italy, I learnt that the Roman Government did not keep their faith with the robbers, and that at the end of twelve months they were still in the Castle St. Angelo. I leave the whole of this transaction without any comment.

posts, absurd restrictions, ruinous monopolies, and frivolous impediments, with which commerce is fettered, act as a complete interdict to it. So many difficulties and perplexities are in the way of every branch of business, and so many delays and forms, and offices and vexations, have to be passed through in the importation and exportation of every commodity—even of the native produce of the Pope's dominions, in their passage from one part of it to another—that a man had need of the patience of Job to transact business at Rome.

To give you some faint notion of this: the wine of Montefiascone, though remarkably delicious, is scarcely to be had in Rome at all; and that of Orvietto, though grown at a trifling distance, sells at nearly treble its price on the spot. The *Annona* laws, with all their absurdities, are still in force; and the popularity of the Pope and his ministers is by no means increased by the heavy duties (gabelle) which their wisdom has seen fit to lay on every sort of article.

Duties carried to excess equally impoverish the revenue and the subject. The consumption is so materially diminished, that the small quantity used produces far less under an extravagant tax, than a large quantity would under a moderate one; not to mention the temptation to smuggling, the expense of keeping up a check upon it, and the impossibility of preventing it. Besides, the smaller quantity of your neighbour's produce you import, the less of yours they can afford to take from you; for all commerce is barter. There are many instances of governments acting on this *dog and the shadow* kind of principle; but none, I imagine, ever carried it to more perfection than this. If a merchant from any remote part chooses to send his wine, or oil, or cheese, or wool, or lint, or cloth, or what not, to this metropolis, he must pay a heavy duty, not only on entering the city, but at every town it passes through; while there are various sapient laws enacted against the exportation of the chief articles of native produce.

The government here looks with a jealous eye on Austria, who intermeddles strangely in all affairs; so much so, that sundry sagacious politicians have predicted that the Pope will soon no longer be armed with independent temporal

power, and that the Papal will soon be merged in the Austrian States. Of this, however, I should hope there is little probability; for though an ecclesiastical government is, and must be bad, an Austrian one is ten times worse. It would really be to fall, as they say themselves, "*dalla padella nelle brace;*" or, according to our homely equivalent proverb, "out of the frying-pan into the fire."

Bad as the papal government is, indeed, it is by no means so bad as that beneath which a great part of Italy is groaning. Not so bad, for instance, as Naples, or Piedmont, or Genoa, abandoned by English broken faith to Sardinia; or ill-fated Lombardy; or expiring Venice; or even the little Duchy of Parma; or the still smaller morsel of Lucca, which have been carved out to satisfy the cravings of kingdomless royalty.

Tuscany, upon the whole, has by far the least to complain of. But people in England who talk of erecting Italy into one great independent kingdom, know nothing of the Italians. They hate each other with a hatred surpassing that of common Christians, and the nearer the neighbourhood, the more inveterate the animosity.

Rome and Naples, Pisa and Florence, Florence and Siena, Modena and Bologna,—in short, wherever there are two cities within a reasonable distance of each other, be sure the most cordial detestation reigns between them. A man from a little town or village ten miles off, calls himself a foreigner, and is considered so by the people he comes amongst, just as much as if he came from the other end of the world. A man's 'patria,' in Italy, is the most limited thing imaginable. It is confined to the village which gave him birth.

It is true, that there was, and is, a strong spirit of independence in the north, and, indeed, over the whole of Italy, and it was the want of that principle of union, to which I have alluded, that alone prevented them from asserting their liberty, in that auspicious moment when the French yoke was taken off, and no other was yet imposed. At present, however, the friends of freedom, or the faction of the *carbonari*, as they call themselves, increase every day; and it will be strange, if in Lombardy, at least, they do not soon assume courage enough to break their chains.

They want no masters, neither French nor Austrian. "*Ce sono due bestie,*" said a Milanese to me, with a bitter gesture of detestation. Of the two, however, the present 'bestia' I should suppose to be by far the most generally and deservedly detested. Such, certainly, was the sentiment of a poor man, to whom I happened to observe, that they had now got the Austrian eagle with two necks, instead of the French with one. "*Si, Signora,*" he replied, heaving a deep sigh, "*e mangia doppio.*"

Indeed, the French ought to be beloved at Milan, if anywhere; for they did a great deal for it; instituted new manufactures—erected new buildings—elevated it into the seat of government, the capital of the kingdom—made the wealth of the country flow into it, and in a great measure sacrificed to it the rest of Italy.

And yet their government was so far from popular, that the moment the terror of their arms was removed, we know that the governor was literally torn in pieces. If, therefore, they were so little liked at Milan, which they had patronized, we may conclude they could not be much beloved at Rome, which they had oppressed; or Venice, which they had destroyed. Much good, however, and much evil, may with truth be reported of the French; but the good is gone, and the evil remains. At the same time, it must be owned, that if they were equally rapacious and despotic, they were by no means so senseless, as the governments which have succeeded them; and which seem to have vied with each other in the generous design to whitewash their character at the expense of their own.

Independent of this contrast, however, I own I cannot see that anything Napoleon ever did for Italy was so very surprising. He made himself master not only of the immense revenues of churches and convents, but too often of hospitals; he imposed heavy burdens on the people; and at Rome, at least, reduced many of the nobles to beggary, by exorbitant contributions. Possessed of these immense resources, he made military roads for the progress of his ambition, and built triumphal arches for the gratification of his vanity. Ambition he possessed—insatiate ambition—but not that ambition which is

"The glorious fault of heroes and of gods;"

his ambition was for power, not for glory; to subjugate, not to bless the world. It was the vice of a demon, not the failing of an angel.

I am aware these observations will give great offence to that numerous body of English, who pour forth unqualified praise of Napoleon's reign in Italy; and who, while they profess themselves warm advocates of liberty, very consistently eulogize the man who sought to establish universal despotism through blood and carnage—to lay his iron-bound tyranny, not only over the persons, but the minds of men,—over the press, the commerce, the literature of Europe.

The desolating effects of his reign, I fear, Europe will long feel, in the exhausted resources, increased burdens, and palsied commerce, which weigh down her states; and the hopeless atheism, and dread demoralization, which poison her people.

But I have fallen into a gloomy vein. So adieu!

LETTER XCVI.

OSTIA.

OUR last excursion from Rome was to Ostia. Nothing can be more dreary than the ride to this once magnficent sea-port. Even before you leave the gates of Rome, you find yourself in a desert. You issue out through the Porta San Paola; pass the graves of your countrymen, and the proud sepulchral pyramid of Caius Cestius, the deserted convent of San Paola alle Tre Fontane—and proceed through a continued scene of dismal and heart-sinking desolation; no fields, no dwellings, no trees, no landmarks, no signs of cultivation —except a few scanty patches of corn, thinly scattered over the waste, and huts, like wigwams, to shelter the wretched and half savage people that are doomed to live on this field of death. For, by a strange paradox, man, in order to drag on a miserable existence, is here driven into the very jaws of certain destruction.

The Tiber, rolling turbidly along in his solitary course, seems sullenly to behold the altered scenes that have withered around him. Two thousand years ago, and his shores were blooming in beauty, and crowded with the proud palaces of the great and the gay. Here, it is not only the works of man that have perished; Nature herself seems to have fallen into decay: and the total absence of existing objects seems to give more place for remembrances.

A few miles from Ostia, we entered upon a wilderness indeed. A dreary swamp extended all around, intermingled with thickets, through which roamed wild buffaloes, the only inhabitants of the waste—sometimes seen breaking through the brake, or treading down reeds higher than themselves—sometimes swimming across the stagnant waters—in their habits grown amphibious, like the scenes they tenanted.

A considerable part of the way was upon the ancient pavement of the Via Ostiensis, in some places in good preservation, in others broken up and destroyed. When this failed us, the road was execrable.

The modern fortifications of Ostia appeared before us long before we reached them. At length we entered its gate, guarded by no sentinel; on its bastions appeared no soldier; no children ran out from its houses to gaze at the rare splendour of a carriage; no woman stood with rock and spindle at her cottage-door; no passenger was seen in the grass-grown street. It presented the strange spectacle of a town without inhabitants. After some beating and hallooing, on the part of the coachman and lacquey, at the shut-up door of one of the houses, a woman, unclosing the shutter of an upper window, presented her ghastly face; and having first carefully reconnoitred us, slowly and reluctantly admitted us into her wretched hovel.

"Where are all the people of the town?" we enquired.

"Dead!" was the brief reply.

The fever of the malaria annually carries off almost all whom necessity confines to this pestilential region. But this was the month of April, the season of comparative health, and we learnt, on more strict inquiry, that the population of Ostia, at present, nominally consisted of twelve men, four women, no children, and two priests. A body of convicts, whose lives it is found convenient to shorten, are also kept here; but they, with the few soldiers who constitute their guard, were out at labour when we arrived;* the men were roaming about the marshes, shooting birds and buffaloes, and the woman whom we saw was literally the only person in this deserted town. Yet it still has three churches, and is the see of a bishop.

The ruins of Old Ostia are farther in the wilderness. The sea is now two miles, or nearly, from the ancient port. The cause of this, in a great measure, seems to be, that the extreme

* I understand their principal work is at the *stagni*, or salt marshes, where, by natural evaporation, the salt is made (and very bad it is) that is used in Rome. One of the priests told me the convict-station here was an asylum for criminals, and that, guilty of whatever crimes, if they fled here they escaped trial and further punishment, but that few or none sought it uncondemned.

flatness of the land does not allow the Tiber to carry off the immense quantity of earth and mud its turbid waters bring down; and the more that is deposited, the more sluggishly it flows; and thus the shore rises, the sea recedes, and the marshes extend.

Ostia was originally founded by Ancus Martius,* and it continued to be the only port of Rome until the time of Claudius, who built Porto, on the opposite bank of the river. The marshy Insula Sacra, in the middle of the river, once sacred to Apollo, and now inhabited by wild buffaloes, divides the two ancient harbours which Cassiodorus calls 'the eyes of Rome.' After the building of Claudius's new port on the right bank of the river, the left stream, by which Æneas had entered its "yellow" tide, and on which Ostia stands, was quite deserted.

We had intended to have crossed to the Sacred Island, and from thence to the village of Fiumicino, on the other side, where there are said to be still some noble remains of ancient Porto, particularly of the mole; but a storm suddenly came on, with such tremendous fury, that it was with the utmost difficulty we could keep our feet; and our plan of crossing the wide mouth of the Tiber, in a crazy boat, was wholly frustrated. Bribery itself would not induce the boatmen to venture.

The hats of the gentlemen were bound on their heads with handkerchiefs, and arm-in-arm we tried to contend with the fury of the blast, so far as to see the remains of Old Ostia. They are on higher ground, scattered over a green plain, "purpled with vernal flowers." Broken columns of granite, slabs of marble, and fragments of inscriptions without number, were strewed along the grass. All over it the turf was heaved in many a verdant hillock, which seemed to cover the ruins of magnificent temples and palaces.

We saw the fine Roman brick walls of an ancient building, called by the vulgar a Temple, and by antiquaries a Curia,—but why a senate-house at Ostia? We looked in vain for any traces of the camp of Æneas, which must have been near here; and as for the Numicus—the

"Fontis stagna Numici,"

* Livy, l. i, c. 33; "In ore Tiberis Ostia urbs condita," &c.

it is nowhere to be seen, not even by antiquarian eyes, along the whole extent of coast.

We saw, indeed, the dry bed of a stream, called the *Fiume Morto*, but it is close to, and has evidently been, the bed of the Tiber. Another *Fiume Morto*, the people told us, is in the *Isola Sacra*.

Our examination of the remains of antiquity at Ostia, if any more there be, was, however, abruptly terminated. Obliged to yield to the increasing violence of the storm, we were driven back to the wretched *osteria* we had left. In its large black kitchen, hall, and common apartment, the only habitable place in it, we found assembled some wild ruffian-looking men, who had sought shelter, like ourselves, from the gale; two of them were playing at the game of morrà, their countenance inflamed with eagerness, and occasionally with passion, as disputes arose about the number of fingers they had shown.* But no bloody termination ensued. Three or four of their companions were looking on.

They soon resigned to us the dirty table of boards, and the wooden benches, which, except a few crazy stools and empty casks, formed the only furniture of the place; and here we ate the cold dinner we had brought with us from Rome.

The storm also prevented us from visiting the site of Laurentinum, the winter villa of the Younger Pliny,† which is about four miles from hence, on the coast. Some of the walls, I understand, are still standing.

We delayed our departure as long as possible, in hopes the storm would abate; but in vain. We returned at last without having visited the Insula Sacra, or the ruins of the Port, on the opposite shore, where now stands the village of Fiumicino. We consoled ourselves for our disappointment by the resolution to make another excursion to them from Rome by the other side of the Tiber; but this, like many such resolutions, has never been accomplished.

* For some account of this game, see Letter LII.

† The same so minutely described in Pliny, l. ii, Epist. 17.

LETTER XCVII.

Sunset on the Palatine—The Colosseum and the Forum by Moonlight.

On one of those delicious evenings that close the bright and beautiful days of autumn in this country, I lingered on the Palatine until the sun sunk in a flood of light and glory, such as no power of language or of painting can portray. Vainly would imagination try to body forth the beauty of an hour like this beneath the heavenly sky of Italy. The soft mist that floated over the landscape like a silver veil, softened, without obscuring, every object, and gave a shadowy beauty to the grey tombs that covered the wide plain of the Campagna, while the hues that painted the Sabine Hills, the purple lights that, fading, blended into distance, and the last crimson glow that was reflected from the tops of the embattled Apennines, altogether formed a picture that would have awakened admiration in the coldest breast.

I stood on the terrace of the Palace of the Cæsars,—on that ancient hill where the kings of Rome, the heroes of the Republic, and the imperial tyrants of the world, had successively triumphed and passed away.

The last horizontal beam of the god of day, darting under the broad shade of the dark pine-tree, fell on the shattered ruins at my feet. Eighteen centuries had now almost completed their course since first his radiance had illumined the golden walls of this magnificent fabric: a thousand years his light had seen them laid in ruins, and still his setting ray seemed to shine with redoubled splendour on the fallen

marbles of that proud fane within which he was once adored.*

> "Slow sinks, more lovely ere his course be run,
> O'er Latium's desert plains—the setting sun;
> Not, as in northern climes, obscurely bright,
> But one unclouded blaze of living light:
> O'er Rome's proud seat, o'er Tiber's sacred isle,
> The god of gladness sheds his parting smile;
> O'er his own regions lingering loves to shine,
> Though there his altars are no more divine."

Transitory as beautiful, the deep glow of the western sky quickly faded away;—the shades of evening rapidly closed around—no twilight here interposed its meditative hour, but the moon arose with a brightness and beauty unknown to our wintry climate, and the evening star lighted her glowing lamp in the west; as beneath their mingled rays, which trembled through the dark shade of the tall cypresses, we slowly passed along the now forsaken Triumphal Way towards the Colosseum. Would that I could describe it to you as it stood in its ruined loneliness amidst the deserted hills of ancient Rome, surrounded with the remains of overthrown temples, imperial palaces, triumphal arches, and buried thermæ,—mighty even in decay!

The still, pale moonbeam fell on the lines of its projecting columns, range above range, to the lofty attic, in silvery light, leaving the black arches in mysterious darkness.

We passed under the great arch of entrance, crossed the grass-grown area, ascended the long staircases, and traversed the circling corridors. No sound met our ear but the measured tread of our own footsteps, and the whispered murmurs of our own voices. The deep solitude and silence, the immensity and the ruin of the great fabric that surrounded us, filled our minds with awe; and as we caught the view of the stars appearing and disappearing through the opening arcades, marked the moonbeams illumining the wide range of these lofty walls, and raised our eyes to the beauty of the calm, clear firmament above our head,—we

* The broken Corinthian columns, and capitals of a temple on this hill, are supposed to be the ruins of the famous Temple of Apollo on the Palatine.

could not but remember that, many ages past, these eternal lights of heaven had shone on the sloping sides of this vast amphitheatre when they were crowded with thousands of human beings, impatient for the barbarous sports of the rising day,—where now only the wild weeds waved as the night-breeze passed over them.*

Nature holds her eternal course;—the works of man perish. Earth is strewed over with the mouldering vestiges of his vanity and ambition; and yet, compared with his own little space, how durable are even those mute memorials! How wonderful is the discrepancy between the duration of his works and his own existence! The buildings he raises, the characters he impresses on the page, the colours he spreads on the canvas, the forms he creates in the breathing marble—live; they enjoy a species of immortality on earth: but he passes away like a shadow.

We gazed around us on the gigantic wreck of this mighty fabric; and as we recalled what it had once been, the long procession of years which had gone by—the silent march of time—the countless generations that had gone down to the dust, rushed forcibly upon our mind. The proud masters of the world were no more; and we, pilgrims from a then despised and barbarous land, were wandering amidst the ruined monuments of their pride and their power, to admire their grandeur and to mourn over their decay!

We quitted the Colosseum; we passed along the untracked course of the Via Sacra, amidst ruined temples and tottering arches; we beheld before us the once-proud Capitol; we stood in the Roman Forum. How well did this hour of stillness, when nature itself seemed hushed, accord with this scene of ancient glory! How softly tho silver moonbeams fell on the Corinthian columns and broken porticos of the temples, whose very gods are forgotten! How distinctly its clear light marked the dark decaying marble of that proud sculpture, meant to immortalize the triumphs of heroes; and how beautifully its pale and mournful ray harmonized with the mouldering arches sunk in earth, like the deeds they commemorate! I could

* It was customary for the common people thus to secure places over-night to see the games.

almost have fancied that I saw Time seated amidst the ruins he had made, mocking at their vanity, as he worked at their destruction. Our thoughts turned upon those over whom he has no power,—for whom there is no monument,—but whose memory is immortal on earth; and we felt, not without emotion, that we stood on the venerable soil where Camillus, and Scipio, and Brutus, and Cicero had trod.

In future years, how often in my native land shall I recal to my mind

> "that in my youth
> When I was wandering,—upon such a night
> I stood within the Colosseum's walls,
> 'Midst the chief relics of almighty Rome.
> The trees which grew along the broken arches
> Waved dark in the blue midnight, and the stars
> Shone through the rents of ruin; from afar
> The watch-dog bayed beyond the Tiber; and
> More near from out the Cæsar's palace came
> The owl's long cry; and interruptedly
> Of distant sentinels the fitful song
> Begun and died upon the gentle wind."
>
> * * * *
>
> And thou didst shine, thou rolling moon, upon
> All this, and cast a wide and tender light
> Which soften'd down the hoar austerity
> Of rugged desolation, and fill'd up,
> As 't were, anew, the gaps of centuries;
> Leaving that beautiful which still was so,
> And making that which was not, till the place
> Became religious, and the heart ran o'er
> With silent worship of the great of old,
> The dead but sceptred sovereigns, who still rule
> Our spirits from their urns!"
>
> LORD BYRON.

Whilst our hearts were touched with feelings such as these, a bell from a distant convent on the Cælian Hill, which tolled to call the friars to their midnight devotions, broke upon the silence of night. At the sound, a figure glided from the shade of the Temple of Concord, passed before us like a shadow, and disappeared among the trees.

We were somewhat startled at this apparition, which, according to all the rules of romance, should have served as the prelude to some mysterious adventure; but it only served to warn us to go home to bed; and, as it appeared to us no more, nor even condescended to explain why it had appeared at all, you may conceive it to have been a ghost or a man, a monk or an assassin, as best suits your fancy. Farewell.

INDEX.

Absolution granted by the Pope, i. 421
Academy of Fine Arts, at Siena, i. 33, 35
——— French, established in Rome, ii. 163
——— of St. Luke, ii. 89, 90
——— of Music, ii. 263
Acanthus, wild luxuriance of the, contrasted with its sculptured form, i. 142; growth and bloom of, i. 143; decorative use of, in architecture, i. 222
Accademia of sacred music, ii. 189
Accius Nævius, i. 3
Acqua Pendente, romantic situation of, i. 46
Actors first sent to Rome, from Etruria, i. 274; present inferiority of, ii. 269
Ædiles, plebeian, i. 335, *n.*
Æsop, a celebrated actor of antiquity, i. 277
Aggeres, or mounds of defence, i. 159
Agrippa, battles of, i. 304
Alaric, destruction of Rome by, i. 124
Alba Longa, the Trojan town, the mother of Rome, i. 89, ii. 361; site of, i. 150
Alban Lake, once the crater of a volcano, ii. 366; remarkable outlet to, ii. 355
—— Mount, first view of, i. 89; ascent of, ii. 362, 364
Albano, situation of, i. 89; antiquities of, ii. 355; grottos of, ii. 354, 357, 359
Alexander Severus, aqueduct of, i. 348
Alfieri, tragedies of, ii. 265
Algidum, city of, ii. 342, 378
Algido, Monte, ii. 378
Almo, classic stream of, i. 384, 430
Altar of Consus, i. 259
Altar of the Elician Jove, erected by Numa, i. 164, 165
—— of Jupiter Viminalis, i. 177
—— to Misfortune, i. 175
—— of Murcia, i. 259.
—— Pagan, at Siena, i. 32
—— of Serapis, i. 268
—— to the god of Secrecy, i. 259
—— to the god Terminus, i. 154
—— of Vulcan, i. 199
Amazons, statues of, ii. 76; battle of the, ii. 78
Amici (Amisi), improvements in the microscope by, ii. 385.
Amphitheatre of Pompeii, i. 289
Amphitheatres first built in Rome, i. 286; wild beasts, for the, fed with criminals, i. 291
——— of wood, built by Nero, i. 286
——— Flavian.—See *Colosseum.*
Amphitheatrum Castrense, i. 122, 199, 222
Ancient bridges of Rome, i. 338
——— Temple of Piety, erected to

the Roman daughter, who saved her father when condemned to perish with hunger, i. 249; church on the site of the, ibid.
——— Temple of Bellona, site of, i. 251; priests of, ibid.
——— Temple of Janus, i. 250
——— Rome, remains of, i. 75; ruins of, i. 450
Ancus Martius, i. 114
Animals, hall of, i. 96
Anio, a river which runs into the Tiber, i. 335; cascades of the, ii. 333; petrifying quality of the water, ii. 337; rock-deposits of, ibid.
Annibale Caracci, frescoes of. See *Frescoes.*
——————— paintings of. See *Paintings.*
Annunciation, festa of the, ii. 177
Antiques, manufactory of, ii. 312
Antiquity, remains of, on the Via Appia, i. 384; on the Via Latina, i. 389; vestiges of, found in the walls of Rome, i. 119
Antiquarianism, trite definition of, i. 149
Antiquities, natural, of Rome, ii. 283
Antium, the birth-place of Nero, i. 106; ancient town of, ii. 369
Antoninus Pius, Forum of, i. 211; temple of, i. 213
Antinoüs, colossal statue of, ii. 122; far-famed rilievo of, ii. 169, 170
Anxur, view from the cliffs of, ii. 365
Apartment in Cæsar's palace, i. 136
Apellicon, library of, i. 284
Apennines, the, i. 21, 89
Apollo, statue of, i. 5; temple of, on the Palatine, i. 141; library and museum of, i. 142; colossal statue of, i. 259, ii. 86
Apollo Belvidere, i. 104, 105
Apotheosis of Homer, ii. 100
Appius, tribunal of, i. 199
Aqua Acetosa, or mineral spring, 375
——— Appia, Aqua Martia, and Aqua Tepula, waters with which Rome was supplied, i. 347
——— Crabra, celebrated by Cicero, ii. 350.
Aqueducts first constructed in Rome, i. 347; care of, under Augustus, i. 348; description of the, ii. 338; destruction of, i. 349
Aqueduct of Alexander Severus, i. 348
——— of Augustus, i. 347
——— of Claudius, arch of, i. 123, 346, ii. 338; remains of the, i. 348
——— Martian, ruins of, i. 347; immense reservoir of, i. 350
——— of Nero, i. 346
Ara Cœli, church and convent of, i. 75, ii. 15; situation of, i. 154
——— Maxima, the great altar consecrated to Hercules, i. 165, 235
Arabesques, by Raphael, in the Vatican, i. 315; in the baths of Titus, i. 316
Arbor Sancta, or sacred tree, i. 172
Arch of Claudius Drusus Nero, i. 340, 344
——— of Constantine, i. 81, 342
——— of Dolabella and Silanus, i. 344
——— of the Fabii, i. 183
——— of Fabius the Censor, i. 199
——— of Gallienus, i. 344
——— of Germanicus, i. 344, 345
——— of Gordian, i. 340
——— of Janus, i. 343
——— of Marcus Aurelius, i. 345; ii. 85
——— of Musagetes, i. 98
——— of Nero, i. 157 *n.*
——— of San Lorenzo, i. 344
——— of Scipio Africanus, i. 157

Arch of Septimius Severus, i. 79; excavation of the, by the French, ibid; ruins of, i. 190, 341
—— of Tiberius, i. 197
—— of Titus, i. 81, 341
—— of Trajan, i. 209 *n.*
Archias the poet, villa of, ii. 336
Archdukes, palace and tomb of the, at Florence, i. 9
Aricia or La Riccia, where Horace slept on his way to Brundusium, ii. 368; valley of, ibid.
Arno, i. 21
Arnold of Brescia, the champion of civil and religious liberty, i. 160
Artists of modern Rome, ii. 298
Asbestos, cloth of, impervious to fire, ii. 34
Ascanius, grottos of, ii. 363; tomb of, ii. 360
Asylum for outlaws, consecrated by Romulus, i. 157; ibid. *n.*
Athenæum, or public library, i. 159
Augustus, house of, i. 135, 145; temple of Apollo, built by, i. 141; hippodrome of, i. 146; crimes of, i. 254, *n.*; mausoleum of, i. 369; the sarcophagus of, i. 370, birth-place of, ii. 369, *n.*
Augustinian convent, monks and library of the, ii. 3
Aurelius, column of, i. 88, 213
Aventine Hill, i. 163; origin of its name, ibid.; extent of, i. 164; church on the summit of, i. 165; view from the, i. 166; temples on the, i. 166, 167
Aventinus, King of Alba, i. 163

B.

Baccano, near it is obtained the first view of Rome, i. 61
Bacchus, Indian, statue of, i. 101
Balthazar Peruzzi, remarkable painting by, "The Sibyl prophesying the birth of our Saviour," i. 36
Bambino, or infant Jesus, remarkable image of, ii. 16, 17
Banditti, ii. 373, 378; imprisonment of, ii. 379; negotiation of the Papal Government with, ibid; noted haunts of, i. 89
Baptistery of St. John Lateran, i. 400
Barberini palace, ii, 106; piazza, i. 257
Barbone, a noted chief of banditti, ii. 378
Basalt, Egyptian, lions of, mentioned by Madame de Staël, i. 155
Basaltic columns, i. 43, 46, 51
Basilicas, or ancient Roman churches, i. 393, 429
Basilica Emilia, i. 198
——— Julia, i. 196
——— of Livia, i. 141
——— of Paulus Æmilius, remains of, i. 80, 198
——— Porcia, remains of, most ancient in Rome, i. 191
——— of St. John Lateran, i. 393, 397
——— of St. Peter, i. 70, 73, 423, 426
——— of Santa Maria Maggiore, i. 428; Christmas ceremony in, ii. 211
——— of St. Paul, i. 430
——— of Santa Croce, i. 433
——— of San Lorenzo, i. 436
——— of San Sebastiano, i, 383, 435
——— Ulpia, i. 208

Baths of Agrippa, i. 304
—— of Caracalla, i. 305; plan of, i. 306; halls of, i. 308; statues found in the, and present preservation of, i. 310
—— of Constantine, i. 177, 304; ii. 102
—— of Decius, i. 305
—— of Diocletian, i. 177; converted into a Christian church, i. 332
—— of the Empress Helena, i. 304; ruins of the, ii. 161
—— for women, in Hadrian's villa, ii. 325
—— of Nero, i. 144; ii. 123
—— of St. Philip, calcareous springs at, i. 43
—— of Tiberius, i. 141
—— of Titus, i. 311; vestiges of, i. 82
—— ancient, of the Romans, i. 301; uses, and remains of, i. 302, 304; various kinds of, i. 309
—— antique, in the court of the Vatican, i. 95
Beatrice Cenci, portrait of, by Guido, ii. 103; history of, ii. 104
Befano, the, ii. 235
Belisarius, prophetic warning of, to Totila, i. 125; troops of, lodged in the palace of the Cæsars, i. 139; stone, bearing the inscription of the death of, i. 121
Bellona, temple of, i. 251, 254; priests of, i. 251, 252
Belvedere, extensive view from, i. 165
—— museum, i. 98
Benediction of the Pope at the close of the Holy Week, ii. 205; extent of the, ii. 206
Bernini, colonnades by, in St. Peter's, i. 74; statues by, i. 23; remarkable group by, i. 459
Besendina, i. 48
Bibliotheca Ulpia, i. 328
Boars, wild, among the Sabine Hills, ii. 296
Bocca della Verità, a singular stone in the church of Santa Maria in Cosmedin, i. 234
Bologna, John of, statue of Mercury by, i. 7
—— cemetery of, ii. 290.
Bolsena once destroyed by fire from heaven, i. 48; lake of, ib.; antiquity of, i. 49; temple of, ibid.; forest of, i. 50, 51
Bona Dea, temple of, i. 167; female freemasonry of, ibid.
Bonaparte, his spoliations in Italy, ii. 383
—— Lucien, ii. 348, 373
Borghese palace, ii. 124
—— chapel, i. 429
Borgo San Spirito, or great hospital of Rome, ii. 23
Botanical riches of Rome, ii. 284
Brickwork, excellent, of the reigns of Augustus, Nero, and Titus, i. 242
Bridge Ælius, i. 334
—— of Caligula, i. 187
—— of Cestius, i. 333
—— first, built of wood, i. 331
—— of stone, i. 332
—— of Fabricius, mentioned by Horace, i. 332, 333; ii. 17
—— Janiculensis, i. 333
—— Milvian, the only bridge over the Tiber out of Rome, i. 334
—— Palatine, i. 332
—— of San Angelo, i. 334, 402
—— of Santa Trinità, view of Florence from the, i. 16
—— triumphal, still visible on the Tiber, i. 333
Bridges, ancient and modern, i 331, 339
Britons, sale of, in Rome as slaves, i. 195; the proximate cause of the introduction of Christianity into this country, i. 196

Bull-fight in the Colosseum, i. 293
Buon Convento, village of, i. 39
Burattini, ii. 267
Burials in Rome, i. 356; ii. 288
Busts, antique, ii. 69
—— of the Emperors, ii. 73
—— of the Poets, in the Pantheon, i. 228

C.

Cabinet, Profane, in the Vatican, ii. 37
—— Sacred, in the Vatican, ii. 35
Cacus, cave of, i. 165, 169
Cæsar, palace of, i. 139; apartment in, i. 136
Cœnacula, or eating rooms, i. 144
Caius Cestius, pyramids of, i. 367, 369
—— Duilius, the first Roman who gained a naval victory, i. 250
—— and Lucius, colossal statues of, i. 155
Caligula, houses of, i. 136; bridge built by, ibid. *n.*
Callimachus, i. 142
Cameos, ii. 312
Camere of Raphael, ii. 46
Camuccini, the Artist, ii. 134; his fine cabinet of paintings, ibid.
Camp of Hannibal, ii. 360, 364
—— Prætorian, of Domitian, ruins of the, ii. 360
—— for foreign soldiers, i. 173
Campagna, view over the, i. 61–64; ruins on the, i. 378
Campidoglio, place of execution for malefactors, i. 75
Campo Santo, or cemetery of Naples, ii. 290.
—— Vaccino, i. 76
Campus Martius, i. 70, 88, 119
—— Sceleratus, in which the Vestal virgins were buried alive, i. 124, 270
—— Ustrinus, i. 367
Canova, Perseus and Pugilists of, i. 107; the first Italian sculptor of the age, ii. 298; works of, ii. 299, 301
Capitol, modern, i. 75, 149; piazza of the, once the place of execution for malefactors, ibid.; tower of, i. 85; view of modern and ancient Rome from, ibid.; remains of, i. 153
Capitoline Hill, colossal statues on the, i. 155; temples and altars on, i. 156, 159
Capuchins, church of the, ii. 9; convent of, ii. 362, 367; museum of bones of monks, ii. 11
Car, used in chariot-races, model of, in the Vatican, i. 264
Caracalla, baths of, i. 305; circus of, i. 265, 354
Caracci, paintings of, in the palace of Lucien Bonaparte, ii. 130
Caravaggio, paintings of. See *Paintings*.
Carceres, divisions for cars in the circus, ii. 266
Cardinal, at confession, i. 418
—— Gonsalvo, i. 455
—— Fesch, his gallery of paintings, ii. 135
Carlo Maratti, tomb of, i. 326
Carnival, festivities of, ii. 253, 259
Carthusians, church and convent of, i. 327
Cartoons of Raphael, i. 101; ii. 47
Caryatides, i. 99
Casa Romuli, or thatched cottage of Romulus, i. 193
Cascade, artificial, made by Sixtus V., ii. 336
Cascades of Tivoli, ii. 329
Casino, Roman, description of, ii. 160
—— in the Borghese gardens, ii. 160
—— of Raphael, ii. 156
Castel Gandolfo, the summer residence of the Pope, ii. 354

Castello Archione, gothic fortress of, ii. 319
Castle of St. Angelo, i. 403; present employment of, i. 404 *n.*; fireworks from, at Easter, ii. 209; imprisonment of banditti in, ii. 379
Castor and Pollux, colossal statues of i. 155; appearance of, i. 189, 190; temple of, i. 189; ancient remains of the, ii. 373
Castra Peregrina, or camp for foreign soldiers, i. 173
Catacombs, extent and primary use of, i. 380, 381; comparison between those of Naples and Rome, ii. 382
Cataracts of Tivoli, ii. 330
Cathedral of Florence, baptistery and remarkable gates of, i. 12, 16
——— of Milan, i. 451
——— Portuguese, ceremonies in the, on Christmas-eve, ii. 211
——— of Siena, i. 30
——— of St. Peter's i. 69
Cathedral of Viterbo, murder at the altar of, by De Montfort, i. 56
Cathedrals, comparative length of, throughout the world, i. 416
Cato, birth-place of, ii. 342
Catullus, villa of, ii. 335
Cavædium, or corridor of Hadrian's villa, ii. 323
Cave of Cacus, i. 165, 169
—— of Sirens, ii. 329
Caverns, immense natural, ii. 363
Caves, artificial, ii. 356
Cecilia Metella, tower of, i. 86; tomb of, i. 365, 366
Cella Solearis, i. 308
Cemetery of Bologna, ii. 290
——— of Florence, ii. 290
——— of Naples, ii. 290
Cemeteries of Italy, ii. 290
Cento Camerelle, of Hadrian's villa, ii. 326
—— Celle, ruins on the Campagna, i. 378
Centaurs and Lapithæ, combat of, i. 99
Centum Gradus, the western ascent of the capitol, i. 162
Cestius, bridge of, i. 333
Chapel of the early Christians, i. 320
——— of La Madonna del Tufo, ii. 362
——— subterranean, of St. Peter's, i. 408
Chariot-races, description of, i. 263; exhibition of, by Nero, i. 264
Charlemagne, marble statue of, i. 71
Chartreuse, retreat of Pius VI., in exile, i. 25
Christ, fourteen representations of, bearing the cross, according to Romish tradition, i. 143, *n.*; the true cross of, i. 433; sepulchre of, ii. 189; ceremony of the entombment of, ii. 115, 195; resurrection of, ii. 201; miraculous discovery of the real blood of, ii. 232; alleged marriage of, with St. Catherine, i. 38
——— painting of the flagellation of, by Sebastian del Piombo, ii. 26
——— statue by Michael Angelo, i. 456
Christian church, i. 193
Christians, put to death in the Circus of Nero, i. 258; ten thousand put to death in one day, i. 432
Christianity established in Rome, i. 129; triumph of, i. 334; freedom of, from human sacrifice, a proof of its divine origin, i. 253
Christina, Queen of Sweden, residence of, ii. 161; credulity of, ibid.
Christmas ceremonies in the Church of Rome, ii. 211
Church of Ara Cœli, i. 154; ii. 15, flight of 124 steps ascended on

the knees by Julius Cæsar, ii. 16; origin of the name of, ii. 17
Church of the Capuchins, ii. 10; painting of the Archangel Michael trampling Satan, by Guido, ibid.; ecstacy of St. Francis, by Domenichino, ibid.
——— of Franciscan friars, at Viterbo, i. 55, 56
——— of Grotta Ferrata, ii. 352
——— of the Jesuits, i. 454
——— of La Maddalena, i. 454
——— of St. Agnes, i. 440, 441
——— of S. Alessio, i. 168
——— of St. Andrea della Valle, 31 ii.
——— San Andrea al Noviziato de' PP. Gesuiti, i. 454
——— Santa Anna, ii. 263 sepulchre of Christ in the, ii. 189
——— St. Adrian, i. 198, 204
——— St. Augustin, ii. 3
——— S. Antonio de' Portoghesi, ii. 189
——— St. Bartholomew, ii. 18
——— San Bernardo, i. 323
——— of Sta. Bibiana, i. 246
——— of San Carlo ai Catinari, ii. 14
——— Santa Cecilia in Trastevere, i. 460
——— of St. Clement, the most ancient existing church in the world, i. 438
——— Sts. Cosmo and Damiano, i. 238
——— of Santa Croce, i. 433
——— S. Georgio, at Tivoli, ii. 332
——— of St. John Lateran, i. 393, 396; remarkable relics in, i. 398; baptistery of, i. 400
——— of San Lorenzo fuori le mura, erected by Constantine, i. 436
——— San Luigi de' Francesi, ii. 4
Church of La Madonna de' Monti, i. 174
——— della Villa, in Palestrina, ii. 372
——— of Santa Maria degli Angeli, i. 325
——— dell' Anima, ii. 13
——— della Consolazione, i. 196
——— in Cosmedin, the supposed school of St. Augustin, i. 233, 234
——— Liberatrice, i. 80
——— di Loretto, i. 460
——— Maggiore, i. 428; remarkable relics in, i. 429, 434; religious ceremonies in, on Christmas-day, ii. 211
——— sopra Minerva, i. 455
——— Navicella, i. 173
——— della Pace, ii. 2
——— del Priorata, i. 165, 167
——— in Trastevere, ii. 13, 23
——— of the Trinità de' Monti, i. 88
——— Vallicella, ii. 12; built by St. Filippo Neri, ibid.; portrait of, by Guido, ibid.
——— of SS. Martin and Sylvester, i. 319
——— of Santa Martina, i. 197
——— of Santa Martina and St. Luca, i. 183, 197
——— of San Nicola in Carcere, i. 249
——— in Pane Perna, i. 176
——— of Sant' Onofrio, where the remains of Tasso repose, ii. 24

Church of St. Paul fuori le mura i. 43
——— alle tre fontane, the place of the Apostle's martyrdom, i. 432
——— of St. Peter, i. 70, 73; colonnades of, i. 74; erection of, i. 407; subterranean chapel in, i. 408; confessionals of, i. 415; services in, during the Holy Week, ii. 186, 189; illumination of, ii. 208
——— St. Pietro, on the Esquiline, i. 456
——— St. Pietro in Montorio, view of ancient and modern Rome from, ii. 25
——— Santa Sabina, i. 168
——— of St. Sebastian, i. 383, 435
——— of S. Silvestro, i. 319
——— of San Stefano, i. 442; Rotondo, i. 171
——— of St. Theodore, i. 86; here the twins were exposed and suckled by the wolf, ibid.; rebuilding of, 193 *n.*
——— St. Urban VIII., i. 386
Cicero, connection of, with the Roman forum, i. 78; eloquence and fame of, i. 79; murder of, i. 78; house of, i. 129; Rostrum of, ii. 224; Tusculum villa of, ii. 343; school of, ii. 344 *n.*
Cimabue, the father of painting, i. 35
Ciminus, the ancient, i. 57
Circle, ancient symbolical meaning of, ii. 321
Circus, sports of, i. 260; the only remaining one, i. 264, 265; right of place in, i. 267
——— Agonalis, games of, i. 256
——— Flaminius, i. 256
——— of Caracalla, i. 265, 354
——— of Flora, games of, exhibited every spring festival, still retained, i. 257
——— of Hadrian, i. 258
Circus Maximus, i. 256, 259, 260; plan of the, i. 258
——— of Nero, i. 257; Christians put to death in, i. 258
——— of Sallust, i. 257; site and form of, i. 269
Civita Castellana, i. 373
——— Lavinia, ii. 368
Classic mountains, i. 89, 90
Claude Lorraine, house of, magnificent view from, ii. 11. See *Paintings*.
Claudius, temple of, in Britain, near the Thames, i. 213; banishment of the Jews from Rome, by, i. 285; aqueduct of, ii. 338
——— Drusus Nero, arch of, i. 340; fame of, ibid.
Cleopatra, beautiful statue of, i. 97
Clivus Asyli, ascent from the Forum to the altar of Romulus, i. 162
——— Publicii, ascent of Mount Aventine, i. 165
Cloaca Maxima, most ancient of the Roman remains, i. 217; present utility of, after a lapse of 3000 years, ibid.
Clodius, villa of, ii. 359; murder of, ibid. *n.*
Cocles, Horatius, defence of the Pons Sublicius by, i. 87; statue of, i. 202
Cœlian mount, i. 82; convent of, i. 170, 171; temples and monuments on the, i. 172
Coins, Roman, i. 138
Cola di Rienzi, abode of, i. 447; character of, ibid.; titles of, i. 446; coronation of, i. 448; rise and fall of, ibid.; death of, i. 449, 450
Collis Hortulorum, on the Pincian Hill, i. 66
Colonna palace, gallery of, ii. 100, 105; statuary and painting of the, ii. 101, 103
Colonnades of St. Peter's, i. 74· the work of Bernini, ibid.

Colossal statues, i. 155, 177; ii. 63
Colosseum, ruins of the, i. 81; situation of, i. 82; consecration of, by Benedict XIV., ibid.; desecration of, by the French, i. 83; prophecy of Bede respecting the, i. 286; opening of, by Titus, i. 287; architecture and plan of, i. 288, 289; fall of, i. 292, 295; gigantic ruins of, i. 299; romantic view of, by moonlight, ii. 390
Columbaria, or sepulchral chambers, i. 365
Column of Aurelius, i. 88, 213
——— Phocas, i. 186
——— Rostral, ii. 85
——— of Trajan, i. 88, 211
Columna Bellica, i. 251; the absurdly reputed, ii. 103
Columns, antique, i. 431
——— Corinthian, of Grecian marble, i. 79, 185; dispute respecting, i. 187
Combats of wild beasts, i. 290; Christians exposed to the rage of, i. 291
Comedy, Roman, i. 275
Comitium, the, i. 187, 203
Commerce of Italy, ii. 93
Commodus fights as a gladiator, i. 291; body of, hurled from the Pons Sublicius, i. 331
Commons, want of, ii. 247
Concord, temple of, i. 185, 199
Confessionals in St. Peter's, i. 415,
Confessors, i. 415, 417; ii. 202
Constantia, one of the first Christian princesses in the world, i. 100
Constantine the Great, arch of, i, 376; marble statue of, i. 71; hippodrome of, i. 378, 441; defeat of Maxentius by, i. 334; church erected over the tomb of St. Paul, by, i. 430; mother of, i. 379 *n.*
Consus, altar of, on the Metæ, i. 259
Convents, existing number of, in Rome, ii. 213; general practice of retiring to, ii. 223
Convents of Viterbo, twenty-eight in number, i. 53
Convent of Carthusians, i. 25
——— of the Chartreuse, i. 25
——— of Greek Basilican monks at Grotta Ferrata, ii. 350, 351.
——— of Passionist friars, ii. 364
——— of Penitents, ii. 366
——— of St. Augustin, ii. 3
——— of Santa Croce, i. 435
——— of St. Gregory, ii. 5; remarkable frescos in, ii. 6
——— of St. John, i. 82; ii. 223
——— of Santa Maria dell' Imprunata, i. 25; famous image of the Virgin in the, i. 26
——— of St. Paul, i. 82; ii. 223
——— of Santa Rosa, i. 54
——— of S. Sylvestro, ii. 213; ceremony of taking the veil in, ii. 215, 218
——— of Santa Theresa, ii. 221
——— Sepolto Vivo, in which contumacious nuns are imprisoned, ii. 221
——— of Tor' de' Specchi, ii. 222
——— of the Vallombrosa, i. 21
Conversazioni, ii. 259
Cora, ancient city of, ii. 369; antiquities of, ii. 370
Corsini chapel, in the church of St. John Lateran, i. 395; palace, ii. 137
——— palace of, ii. 139
Corso, the principal street of the city of Rome, i. 66; ii. 256
Cosmo de' Medicis, tomb of, at Florence, i. 11; character and fame of, ibid; i. 12
Criminals, public execution of, ii. 258
Critics, court of, instituted by Augustus, i. 142
Cross, illuminated, in St. Peter's, ii. 188; illustrious votaries of the, ibid.

Curia or Roman senate-house, i. 80
—— Calabra, where the priests made their astronomical observations to fix the Ides and Nones, i. 158
—— Hostilia, the senate-house of Tullus Hostilius, i. 171—174
—— Julia, i. 188
—— of Ostia, ii. 387
Curiatii, tomb of the, ii. 360
Curius Dentatus, humble abode of, ii. 342
Custom-house, on the Roman frontier, i. 43, 44
———— at Rome, i. 66
Cyclopean walls, ii. 369, 371
Cybele, first temple of, i. 143; annual feast of, ii. 259

D.

Dancing Faun, statue of the, i. 4
Dante, portrait of, i. 16; inspired muse of, i. 18
Decius, baths of, i. 304
Deity, statue of the, i. 14
Delubrum, a temple dedicated to many gods, i. 224
Depraved state of morals in Rome, ii. 245
Diana, temple of, i. 166, 169; prayer of Gracchus in the, i. 170; statue of, ii. 63; bronze sculpture of, as the Pagan Trinity, ii. 72; baths of, ii. 357; tower of, ii. 367
Diocletian, parentage of, i. 329, *n*; baths of, i. 323; massacre of his subjects by, i. 328
Discobolus, statue of the, i. 101
———— in the Palazzo Massimi, ii. 113
Disputed columns, the, i. 187, 189
Dogana, on the Roman frontier, i. 43, 44; of Rome, i. 66
Domenichino, frescos of, ii. 6, 13, 24. See *Frescoes*; paintings of, ii. 88, 95, 125, 145, 153, 154. See *Paintings*; remnants of the frescos of, ii. 351, 352
Domitian, tomb of the family of, i. 120; celebrated ancestor of, i. 190 *n*; only statue of, ii. 166; villa of, ii. 359; nymphæum of, ii. 357; camp of, ii. 360
Doria, palace of, ii. 94; gallery of, ii. 95, 99
Dramas, first performed in Greece, and in Rome, i. 275; invention of, traced to Egypt, ibid; present state of in Italy, ii. 269; sacred, ii. 268
Duilius, the first Roman who obtained a naval triumph, i. 250
Dying Gladiator, statue of, ii. 79, 82; Winkelman's opinion of, ibid, *n*.

E.

Early Christians, martyrdom of the, i. 291, 321, 432; altar of, in the Church of St. Sylvester, i. 320; place of concealment of, i. 380; chapel of, i. 382; exposed to the wild beasts, i. 291
Easter Sunday, festival of, ii. 203
Egeria, fountain of, i. 384; grotto of, i. 385; supposed transformation of the nymph, ii. 368
Egina Marbles, ii. 313; discovery of, ii. 314, 316; interesting group of, ii. 315
Egypt, Obeliscs of, i. 259; brought to Rome, i. 351, 355
Egyptian ancient sculpture, ii. 65
———— Caryatides, of granite, supposed to represent Antinoüs as a priest, i. 99, 100
———— lions in basalt, i. 155
———— obelisk of granite, i. 65

Egyptian temple, ii. 325
Emissarium, the, or outlet to the Alban Lake, ii. 355
Emerald plasm, sculpture in, ii. 168
Eminentissimi, a title given to Cardinals, ii. 177
Emperors, busts of the, ii. 73, 74
——— forums of the, i. 214
——— statues of the, i. 93
Empress Helena, said to have been an Englishwoman, i. 379. *n*; church of Santa Croce built by, i. 433; relics from the Holy Land, collected by, i. 434; sarcophagus of, i. 100
Encœnia, celebration of the, at Hadrian's villa, ii. 325
Ennius, the first poet of Rome, i. 166
Epiphany, festa of the, ii. 235
Equestrian statue of Trajan, i. 210
——— of Marcus Aurelius, i. 76
Esculapius, temple of, in the sacred island, ii. 18
Esquiline Hill, ruins of, i. 173, 174; derivation of its name, i. 175; palace of Tullius on the summit, i. 174; Imperial dwellings on, ibid; ii. 161
Eternal Father, statue of the, i. 14
Etruria, i. 49
Etrurians, obscurity of their history, i. 49; cultivation of the fine arts by, i. 50; ii. 70
Etruscan vases, i. 6
——— sculpture, ii. 313
——— statue, i. 193
——— system of engineering, ii. 356
Euripus, canal round the circus, i. 260
Executions, public at Rome, previous to the carnival, ii. 258, 259

F.

Fabius, the Roman Consul, i. 57
——— the censor, arch of, i. 199
Fabii, arch of the, i. 183
Fabricius, bridge of, mentioned by Horace, i. 332; ii. 17
Falconieri Palace, paintings in, ii. 133, 135
Fantoccini, or Burattini, Italian puppet-dramas, ii. 267
Farce, Oscan, or Atellanæ, plays performed by young Roman amateurs, i. 274
Farm, Sabine, of Horace, ii. 337
Farnese, Popes and Princes, i. 139; gardens, i. 140, 143; convent, ibid; palace, ii. 142
Farnesina, painted hall of the, ii. 140
Fasti Consulares. ii. 87
Faun, Dancing, statue of, i. 4
Ferentinum, modern Marino, fountain and temple of, ii. 353
Feriæ Latinæ, i. 89; celebration of the, ii. 363
Festa of the Annunciation, ii. 177
——— of the Epiphany, ii. 235
Festival of St. Peter's, ii. 208
Festini, or public masked balls, ii. 257
Feudal ruins, i. 391
——— wars, of the Roman nobles, i. 139
Fiano Palace, ii. 93
Ficus Nævia, i. 194
——— Ruminalis, the tree beneath which Romulus and Remus were nurtured by a wolf, i. 86, 192—4
Fiesole, romantic situation of, i. 17; convent on the summit of, once the residence of Milton, i. 21
Filatrice, statue of, ii. 307
Filippo Neri, St., miracle performed by, ii. 113

Fine Arts, pre-eminence of the, i. 18, 20; academy of, i. 33, 35; general adaptation of, by the ancients, ii. 70, 71; cultivation of, in Rome, ii. 309, 312; parsimony of the British government in all that relates to, ii. 133, 317
Flaminius, circus of, i. 256
Flavian Amphitheatre, See *Colosseum*.
Flora, a favourite goddess among the Romans, i. 257; games in honour of, ibid
Floralia, or games of Flora, i. 257
Florence, i. 12, 17; the Athens of Italy, i. 18; museum of, i. 6, 9; cathedral of, i. 12, 13; sculptured altar-piece of ditto, by Michel Angelo, i. 14; gates of ditto, representing the history of the Old and New Testament, i. 15; last view of, i. 21; residence of Milton, in the vicinity of, i. 21; hospital of, ii. 229; cemetery of, ii. 290; mosaics of, ii. 311
Florentine gallery of sculpture, i. 1, 5, 92
Florentini theatre of Naples, ii. 264
Fons Olei, or fountain of sacred oil, ii. 23
Fontana di Felice or di Termini, ii. 30
——— Paolina, ii. 28
——— in the Piazza Barberini, ii. 32
——— of the Piazza Navona, i. 354, ii. 31
——— of St. Peter's, ii. 32
——— di Termini, so contrived as to overflow during the heat of summer, ii. 31, 32
Fonte Gerulo, ancient fountain of Egeria, ii. 368
Fora Civilia, for the transaction of public business, i. 182
—— or Forums, of which there were anciently two kinds, i. 182
Fora Venalia, a market, i. 182
Fornarina, the beloved mistress of Raphael, portrait of, i. 5, 6
Fortune, Temple of, inscription on the, i. 185, *n*; statue of, in the Vatican, i. 93
Forum of Antoninus Pius, i. 211; remains of, converted into a Custom-house, i. 212
——— of Augustus, i. 205
——— Boarium, or cattle-market, description of, i. 214, 215; living sacrifices offered in the, i. 216, 217
——— of Julius Cæsar, i. 204
——— of Mars, i. 205
——— of Nerva, i. 205; remains of, still extant, i. 205, 207
——— Olitorium, i. 249
——— of Peace, i. 205, 241, *n*.
——— Populi, ii. 363
——— Roman, degradation of, to a cattle market, i. 76; Corinthian columns, triumphal arches, and ruined temples in, i. 77; plan of the, 179, 188, 191; in the plain of this Forum was fought the battle between the ravishers of the Sabine women and their foes, i. 86; remarkable buildings of, i. 190, 202; ruins of, i. 190, 199; lakes, gulfs, groves, &c. of, i. 201, 202; remarkable scenes in, i. 78, 203; visit to, by moonlight, ii. 391
——— of Trajan, piazza of, excavated by the French, i. 207, 208; erection of, by Apollodorus, i. 209; library of, i. 210; statues of, i. 211
Forums of the Emperors, i. 214
Forums of Greece and Rome compared, i. 182
Fossa Cluilia, i. 391; scene of the combat between the Horatii and Curiatii, ii. 360
——— Quiritium, i. 115
Fountain of Juturna, i. 219

Fountain of Meta Sudans, i. 299
——— of the Aqua Ferentinæ, ii. 353
——— of the nymph Egeria, i. 384; medicinal properties of its waters, ibid.
——— of the Tartaruche, in the Piazza Mattei, ii. 32
——— of Trevi, ii. 29
Fountains of Rome, ii. 29, 32
Frascati, i. 62; modern road to, i. 389, ii. 340; origin of the name, ibid.; villas of, ii. 341; extensive view from, ii. 347
French taste in converting the Roman Forum into a promenade, i. 179
——— academy, established in Rome, ii, 163; occupation of Italy by the, i. 180, ii. 174; desecration of the Colosseum by the, i. 83
Frescoes by Albani, 'Centaur carrying off Dejanira, and Hercules slaying him with an arrow,' ii. 117.
——— by Agostino Caracci, 'Triumph of Galatea;' 'Aurora carrying off Cephalus," ii. 142.
——— by Annibale Caracci, of the 'Eternal Father,' ii. 17; 'Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne,' ii. 142; 'Perseus and Andromeda,' ii. 143; 'Nymph and Unicorn,' ibid.
——— by Camuccini, 'Marriage of Cupid and Psyche,' ii. 133.
——— by Daniel da Volterra, ii. 141.
——— by Domenicheno, 'Martyrdom of St. Sebastian,' i. 326; "The Angel presenting crowns to St. Cecilia and Valerian,' ii. 4; 'Death of St. Cecilia,' ibid.; 'Flagellation of St. Andrew,' ii. 6; 'Flagellation and Glorification of St. Andrew,' ii. 13; 'The Four Evangelists,' ibid; 'The Cardinal Virtues,' ii. 14; 'David dancing before the ark,' ibid.; Judith with the head of Holofernes,' ibid.; 'Esther before Ahasuerus,' ibid.; 'Solomon and the Queen of Sheba,' ibid; 'The Assumption,' ibid; 'Baptism of St. Jerome,' ii. 25; 'St. Jerome tempted by the Devil,' ibid.; 'St. Jerome scourged by Angels,' ibid.; 'Apollo,' ii. 117; 'Time seizing hold of Truth,' ibid; 'Rachael and Jacob," ii. 18; ruins of 18 frescoes, ii. 351.
Frescoes by Giotto, 'St. Peter walking on the waves,' in the church of the Capuchins, ii, 10.
——— by Guercino, 'Aurora,' in the villa Ludovisi, ii. 149, 150.
——— by Guido, 'Flagellation of St. Andrew,' ii. 6; 'Angel and Beggars at dinner with St. Gregory,' ii. 7; 'Choir of Angels,' ibid.; 'The Annunciation,' ii. 145; 'Aurora,' ii. 147.
——— by Giulio Romano, ii. 162
——— by Lanfranco, 'Polyphemus and Galatea,' ii. 117.
——— by Michael Angelo, 'The Last Judgment,' ii. 40, 42; 'Sibyls and Prophets,' ii. 42; 'The Eternal Father,' ibid.; 'The Creation of Man and Woman,' ibid.; Expulsion from Paradise,' ibid.; 'Paradise,' ibid.
——— by Balthasar Peruzzi, 'The Presentation in the Temple,' ii. 141.
——— by Pietro di Cortona, 'The Archangel bearing the symbols of our Saviour's Passion to Heaven,' ii. 12.
——— by Raphael, 'Burning of the Borgo San Spirito;' 'Liberation of St. Peter from Prison;' 'School of Athens,' ii. 48; 'Coronation of Charlemagne by Leo III.,' ii. 49; 'Dispute upon the

Sacrament,' ii. 51; 'Apollo on Mount Parnassus,' ibid.; 'Miracle of Bolsena,' ibid.; 'Meeting of Attila with Pope Leo I.,' ibid.; 'Expulsion of Heliodorus from the Temple by Angels,' ii. 52; 'Cupid and Psyche,' ii. 140; 'Nuptials of Alexander the Great and Roxana,' ii. 157.
Funeral of a cardinal, ii. 298
Funerals, origin of the term, i. 365; early practice of carrying lights at, still enforced by Roman Catholics, ibid.
——— in Rome, ii. 288; similarity between the modern and ancient processions, ii. 289
Furietti mosaic, the, found in Hadrian's villa, ii. 72

G.

Gabii, the ancient, i. 89
Gabinetto di Nerone, or balcony whence Nero viewed the circus games, i. 145
Gabinus, villa of, ii. 345
Galileo, monument of, i. 12
Gallery, geographical, in the Vatican, i. 101
——— of paintings in the Vatican, i. 103
——— of Statues, i. 97
Gallienus, arch of, i. 344
Gambling, in Rome, ii. 295
Games, Agonal, i. 257
——— of the Amphitheatre, i. 290; total abolition of, i. 301
——— of the Circus, i. 260, 261; signal for commencing, i. 262
——— of Flora, i. 257
——— Javanese, i. 300
——— Secular, in honour of Apollo, i. 269
——— of Trastevere, ii. 21
Gardens, Borghese, ii. 158, 160
——— of Julius Cæsar, ii. 157
Gaspar Poussin, landscapes painted by, i. 319
Gate of Pompeii, i. 356
——— triumphal, at the end of the Circus, i. 266
Gates of Rome, i. 117, 123, 124, 125; ancient inscriptions on the Porta Maggiore, i. 117, *n*; at the Porta Pinciana is an inscription to Belisarius, i. 121
Gauls, defeat of the, by the intrepid Manlius, i. 337
Gems, ii. 312
Genezzano, a town near Palestrina, ii. 372; miraculous Madonna of, ibid.
Gensano, a town on the lake of Nemi, ii. 368
Genseric the Vandal, invasion of Rome by, i. 124; pillage of the palace of the Cæsars by, i. 139; spoils taken from the Pantheon by, i. 227
Germanicus, enthusiasm of the people at the supposed recovery of, i. 226, *n*.; arch of, i. 344, 345
Germany, music of, ii. 262
Ghetto, the quarter where the Jews are compelled to reside in Rome, i. 284
Giotto, the Sienese painter, sculptor, and architect, origin and fame of, i. 35
Girandola, the, ii. 208
Giuliano de' Medici, assassination of in the Cathedral of Florence, i. 14
Gladiators, combats of, i. 84; shows of, i. 204; death of, i. 292; expensive exhibition of, by Cæsar, in the Circus, i. 261; senators, and women of rank fought as, i. 262; statue of the Dying Gladiator, ii. 79, 82
Glass, use of by the ancients, i.

132; discovery of, at Herculaneum, ibid.
Glazing, art of, when introduced, i. 132
Golden house of Nero, i. 136-137
Goldoni, plays of, ii. 264, 265, 267
Good Friday, services on, in Roman Catholic churches, ii. 191
Gothic architecture, i. 73
Government of Italy, ii. 380, 382
Gracchi, the, i. 196
Gracchus, prophetic prayer of, fulfilled in Rome's debasement, i. 170
Græcostasis, or hall for foreign ambassadors, i. 190, 191, *n.*
Grecian architecture, i. 73
——— Graces, ancient group of, i. 32
——— sculpture, i. 3, 4; ii. 113
——— statues, the pride of Florence, i. 2
Greece, forums of, i. 182
Gregory the Great, remarks of, in the slave market, i. 195, 196
Grotto of Egeria, i. 385, ii. 368
——— Ferrata, ii. 350; convent of Greek monks in the, ii. 351
——— of Neptune, ii. 329, 333, 337
Grottos of Ascanius, ii. 363
——— of Albano, plan of the, ii. 358
Grove of Laurels, on the Aventine, i. 163
——— Sacred, of the vestal virgins, i. 192
——— of Virbius, beautiful prospect from the, ii. 367
Guard, Prætorian, ruins of the quarters of the, ii. 324
Guido di Siena, i. 34; frescoes of, ii. 6. See *Frescoes*; remarkable painting by, the Archangel trampling upon Satan, ii. 10; paintings of, ii. 89, 133, 134, 145, 147. See *Paintings.*
Gulf of Curtius, i. 202
Gymnasium, or Palæstra, arena of, i. 325

H.

Habits and food of the Italians, ii. 294, 295
Hadrian, splendid temple erected by, i. 244; inhuman murder of the artist who criticised the plan, i. 209, 244; death of the wife of, i. 245; patronage of arts and letters by, i. 245; ii. 72; circus of, i. 258; tomb of, i. 404; villa of, ii. 321; mosaic found in the, ii. 72; mausoleum of, i. 370
Hair of a Roman lady found in a tomb in the Appian way, ii. 37
Hannibal, retreat of, from Rome, temple in honour of, i. 387; camp of, i. 388, ii. 360
Hall of Animals, in the Vatican, i. 96
—— of the Biga, i. 100
—— of the Grecian cross, i. 99, 100
—— of Inscriptions, in the museum of the Capitol, ii. 66, 70
—— of the Muses, i. 98, 99
—— of Niobe, i. 7.
—— of the great Porphyry vase, i. 199
Hawkswood, Sir John, i. 13
Heliogabalus, Baths of, i. 310; body of, hurled from the Pons Sublicius, i. 331; hippodrome of, i, 146
Herculaneum, library at, i. 135
Hercules, great altar of, i. 235; temple of, ii. 332; town sacred to, ibid; remains of the temple of ii. 369
Hills, the seven, i. 127

Hippodrome, the place appointed for chariot races, i. 255
——— of Constantine, i. 441
——— of Hadrian's villa, ii. 322
——— of Heliogabalus, i. 146
Historic scenery, i. 62, 63, 89; ii. 365
——— from the Palatine, i. 147, 148
Holy days, observance of, in Rome, ii, 235
—— doors, i. 421, 422
—— Sepulchre, i. 149
—— staircase, which Christ descended from the judgment seat of Pilate, i. 398
—— week, services of the, ii. 183, 202
—— years, invented by Boniface VIII, i. 421, 422
Homes of the Italians, ii. 292
Honorius, games of the amphitheatre abolished by, i. 300
Horace, Sabine farm of, ii. 329; villa of, ii. 335
Horatii, tomb of the, ii. 360
Horse-races during the Carnival, ii. 257
Horses, Romish ceremony of blessing, ii. 233
Hospital of Florence, ii. 229
——— of Hadrian's villa, ii. 323
——— of San Spirito, at Rome, ii. 229
——— of the Trinità de' Pellegrini, here pilgrims are lodged during the holy week, ii. 196
Hospitals, Italian, situation and character of, ii. 229
House of Augustus, i. 135, 145
——— of Claude Lorraine, ii. 11
——— of Mecænas, i. 312
——— of Nero, i. 136, 137
——— of Nicholas Poussin, ii. 11
——— of Ovid, site of the, i. 159
House of Pilate, i. 445; inscription upon the, i. 446; the residence of Cola di Rienzi, i. 447
——— of Plautius Lateranus, i. 393
——— of Pliny, i. 175
——— of Raphael, ii. 147
——— of St. Catherine, i. 38
——— of Sallust, i. 270
——— of Salvator Rosa, ii. 12
——— of the Scipios, i. 179; ii. 103
——— of Tiberius, i. 136, 146
——— of Virgil, i. 175
——— of the Virgin, i. 434
Houses of ancient Rome, i. 130
——— of Caligula, i. 136
——— of Pompeii, i. 131
——— of the ancients, i. 133, 134; methods of warming, as related by Virgil and Horace, ibid.
Human sacrifices, i. 254
Hunting, ii. 236, 237, 296

I.

Ichnography, or plan of Rome, i. 188, *n.*
Iliac table, representing the principal scenes of the Iliad, ii. 71
Illumination of St. Peter's, and fireworks from, ii. 200
Image, miradulous, in St. Peter's, i. 413
Immorality of the middle classes in Rome, ii. 250, 251
Imperial Palace, baths of the, i. 140, 141
Improvisatore, Sgricci, the celebrated, ii. 273
Improvisatori, academy of in Rome, ii. 272, 276
Improvisatrice, ii. 275, 277
Indolence of the Italians, ii. 237, 296
Indulgences, sale of in the churches of Rome, i. 398 419 420, *n.*

Indulgences promised to the votaries of the black cross in the arena of the Colosseum, i. 83
——— plenary, ii. 19; theological conference respecting, ibid.
Inquisition of Rome, i. 455, ii. 309; founder of the, i. 169
Inscriptions, hall of, ii. 66, 70
Instruments used in sacrifice, compared with those now used in Roman churches, i. 216
Interment of Christ on Holy Thursday, ii. 195
Isis, temple of, i. 166; fine Grecian statue of, ii. 77; ancient statue of, ii. 167
Island, Sacred, i. 87; ii. 18, 387
Italy, scenery of, i. 23, 379; palaces of, ii. 91, 92; commerce of, ibid; occupation of by the French, ii. 174; gardens of, ii. 159; hospitals of, ii. 229; superstitious character of the inhabitants, ii. 234; vexatious imposts in, ii, 381
Italian character, ii. 20, 248; cookery, ii. 293; literature, ii. 282; marriages, ii. 243; nobility ii. 93, 245, 246, 248; peasantry, i. 272; preachings, ii. 193; servants, ii. 125; women, ii. 219
Intermontium, in which stood the Zelum consecrated by Romulus, i. 157
Island of Ponzo, to which the early Romans were exiled, ii. 360
Itinerant musicians, ii. 261

J.

Jani of ancient Rome, i. 215
Janiculum, mount, i. 87, 114, 166, 206
Janus, arch of, i. 343
——— Quadrifrontis, ruin of, i. 214
Jews, Roman, i. 284, 285; banishment of, by Claudius, ibid; baptism of, during the Holy Week in Rome, ii. 198
John of Bologna, fame of, i. 7
Jugurtha, imprisonment and death of, i. 160
Julius Cæsar, birth place of, i. 175; temple of, converted into a slave market, i. 195; forum of, i. 204; descent of, from the goddess Venus, i. 248, *n*; exhibition of gladiators by, i. 261; his value of time, ibid; divorce of the wife of, i. 167; monument of, i. 459
Juno Lucina, beautiful statue of, in the Villa Albani, ii. 166
Jupiter, remarkable statue of, in the Vatican, i. 97
——— Capitolinus, temple of, i. 75; statue of, i. 154
——— Feretrius, i. 153, 154
——— Optimus Maximus, i. 200
——— Stator, temple of, i. 152, *n*; the first temple dedicated to that god in Rome, i. 80
——— Tonans, temple of, i. 79; statue of, ii. 169
——— Viminalis, altar of, i. 177
Justinian, Pandects of, i. 12
Juturna, lake of, i. 190; miraculous appearance of Castor and Pollux, twice on the margin of the, ibid; fountain of, i. 219

K.

King of Spain, residence of the, in Rome, i. 168
Knights of Malta, church in Rome, belonging to the, i. 167; gardens of, ibid.

L.

Lacus, i. 137
Ladies, literary, ii. 249
Lago di Patria, i. 361
Lake, Alban, ii. 355, 366
—— of Bolsena, i. 48; two floating islands of, ibid.
—— of Juturna, situation, i. 190; remarkable appearance of Castor and Pollux on the borders of, ibid.
—— of Nemi, ii. 368
—— of Nero's Golden House, i. 137
—— Regillus, ii. 342
—— Sulphureous, ii. 319
—— Tartarean, ii. 318; petrifying quality of, ii. 319
—— of Vico, i. 57
—— of Viterbo, i. 56
Lambs, ceremony of blessing the, ii. 234
Language of signs, use of, by the Italians, ii. 255
Laocoon, statue of the, i. 110, 111; discovery and restoration of, i. 112, *n.*, i. 318
Lapis specularis, use of for glazing windows, i. 133; found chiefly in Spain, ibid.
La Scala, i. 41
Last Judgment, the noted fresco of Michel Angelo, ii. 41
Lateran Baptistery, i. 400, 401
—— palace, i. 400
Laurentinum villa of the younger Pliny, ii. 388
Lavinium of the Trojans, i. 150, ii. 368
Lectisternum, entertainment given to the gods, i. 273, 368, *n.*
Leonardo da Vinci, character and genius of, ii. 110; works and residence of, ibid; portrait of, ii. 112; portrait of Joan of Arragon by, ii. 97; origin and fame of, ii. 110, 111. See *Paintings.*
Lepidus, villa of, ii. 336
Library of Apellicon, i. 284
—— at Herculaneum, i. 135, *n.*
—— Laurentian, in Florence, i. 12
—— of Liberty, the first public library in Rome, i. 166
—— of Marcellus, i. 149
—— at Milan, i. 36
—— Palatine, i. 142
—— Ulpian, i. 210
—— of the Vatican, ii. 33, 38; sacred and profane cabinets of, ii. 35; papyrus manuscripts of, ii. 36
Libraries of Hadrian's villa, ii. 323
Linternum, i. 361
Literature of Italy, ii. 249, 282
Livia, battles of, i. 141; villa of, i. 374
Loggie of Raphael, i. 92; ii. 56
—— of the Vatican, ii. 59
Lorenzo the Magnificent, duke of Florence, character of, i. 12; library founded by, ibid; attempted assassination of, i. 14
Lotus, planting of the, by Romulus, coeval with the cypress, i. 199; ornamental use of in statuary, ii. 65, 72; relievo of Antinoüs crowned with, ii. 169
Lucien Bonaparte, villa of, ii. 343; occupation of by banditti, ii. 373; stratagem of, to hold communion with Napoleon in Elba, ii. 335, *n.*
Lucius Verus, villa and gardens of, i. 374; busts of, ibid. *n.*
Lucullus, tomb of, ii. 348; extensive cellars in the villa of, ii. 349
Ludus Matutinus, ii. 161
Lung' Arno, i. 17
Lupercal, antiquity and situation of, i. 194, 195
Lupercalia, feasts of the, i. 253
Lutheranism, toleration of, in Rome, i. 175

M.

Macellum Magnum, or market for provisions in Rome, i. 173
Madama, villa of, ii. 164
Madonna, by St. Luke, i. 16
——— miracles wrought by the, ii. 226
Maestre Pie, communities of females for the education of the the poor, ii. 222
Magna Græcia, climate of, i. 134; here the Acanthus blooms, i. 143
Malaria of Bolsena, i. 47, 50
——— of Rome, i. 64, ii. 23, 386
Malediction, on Jews, Turks, and Heretics, ii. 207
Mamertine prisons, dungeons of, i. 160, 161; here St. Peter and St. Paul were imprisoned, ibid.
Manlius Capitolinus, site of the house of, i. 153
——— Torquatus, origin of the surname, i. 337; inscription in memory of, ii. 370
Mantua, relics found at, ii. 232
Manuscripts, rare and valuable, in the Laurentian library, i. 12;
——— on papyrus, in the Vatican, ii. 36
Marana, or Aqua Crabra of Cicero, ii. 350
Marbles, Egina, ii. 313
——— Phigalian, ii. 316 *n.*
Marcellus, library and museum of, i. 142; statue of, ii. 123
Marcus Agrippa, urn of, i. 395
——— Aurelius, ancient temple of, i. 66; famous equestrian statue of, i. 76; statue of, i. 93; triumphal arch of, i. 211, 345; ii. 85
Marino, picturesque situation of, ii. 353; churches and ancient name of, ibid.
Marionettes theatre of, ii. 267
Marius, disputed trophies of, i. 155, 156
Mark Anthony, the murderer of Cicero, i. 78
Market for slaves, i. 195
——— for provisions, i. 173
Marriages in Italy, ii. 243; periods of the year when forbidden, ii. 287; ceremony of, in Catholic churches, ibid
Mars, temple of, erected by Augustus, i. 197; church on the site of, ibid.; forum of, i. 205; priests of, i. 252
Marsyas, statue of, in the Florentine gallery, i. 3, *n.*
Martona, i. 48
Martyrdom of Saints, i. 319
Martyrs, ground of the Colosseum consecrated by the blood of, i. 82; place of interment of, i. 459; relics of, sold throughout Christendom, i. 382
Masaccio's fresco of St. Catherine, in the church of St. Clement, i. 439; death of, i. 440
Masquerade at the Carnival in Rome, ii. 254, 257
Mass, when performed at the great altar of St. Peter's, i. 416
Mausoleum of Augustus, i. 369
——— of the dukes de Medicis, i. 11
——— of Hadrian, i. 361
——— of Santa Constantia, i. 376
Maxentius, defeat of, by Constantine, i. 334; remarkable apparition previous, ibid.
Maximus, The Circus, i. 256; plan of the, i. 258
Mecœnas, house of, i. 312; classic remains of, i. 313
Medical profession in Rome, ii. 247
Medusa, head of, i. 99
Meleager, one of the finest statues in the world, i. 95, 109

Memmi, Simone, i. 35
Mercury, statue of, by John of Bologna, i. 7
Meridian, traced by Bianchini in 1701, i. 327
Meta Sudans, fountain of, i. 299
Metastasio, birth-place of, ii. 349
Michael Angelo Buonarotti, inferiority of existing works to the fame of, i. 6, 10; tomb of, i. 22; life and character of, i. 458; favourite study of Torso, i. 93; painting of the Virgin and dead Christ, in St. Peter's, i. 412; frescos of. See *Frescoes*; the Last Judgment by, ibid.; statue of Christ by, i. 456; statue of Moses, ibid.
Milan, the metropolis of literature, ii. 285; cathedral of, i. 451; library of, i. 36
Mile-stone, recording the distance of the great Roman roads, i. 196
——— ancient Roman, i. 155; in marble, ii. 66
——— ancient Roman, discovery of, i. 124, *n.*
Milliarium Aureum, i. 196
Military amphitheatre, ancient remains of, i. 122
Milton, residence of in the convent of Fiesole, i. 196; scenes in the vicinity of Florence, consecrated in his Paradise Lost, ibid.
Miltonic pictures in the Sistine chapel, ii. 43
Minerva Medica, i. 85
——— procession to the, on Palm Sunday, ii. 176
——— the finest statue of in the world, ii. 169; church of, i. 455; procession to the church of, ii. 176
Mint, the, i. 153
Miracles, Pagan and Roman, ii. 226, 230
——— by Madonnas, ii. 226
Miserere, service of the, in the holy week, ii. 182, 185
Mithra, worship of, first introduced into Rome, i. 96; statue of, ibid.; rilievo of the sacrifices of, ii. 168
Modern Rome, i. 88
Monasterio, a nunnery, ii. 22, 213
Mons Albanus, i. 89; ii. 362, 364
Mons Janiculus, i. 114
Mons Sacer, the hill to which the Roman army retired during the civil wars, i. 335, 336
——— Soracte, i. 88
Monte Algido, i. 89; the site of the city of Algidum, ii. 342; now the resort of banditti, ii. 378
——— Caprino, i. 153; ii. 158
——— Cavallo, the modern name of the Quirinal, i. 177
——— Cavo, i. 89, ii. 362; ascent of, ii. 363; summit of, ii. 364
——— Falcone, ii. 342
——— Mario, i. 164; ascent of, ii. 163; geological treasures of, ii. 283
——— Montorio, i. 114
——— Porcio, the birthplace of Cato, ii. 342
——— Testaccio, formed of fragments of earthenware, i. 429; wine-stores formed in the, i. 430
Montefiascone, i. 52; celebrated wine of, i. 53; ruins of, ii. 381
Monterosi, i. 59
Monti di Pietà, of Rome, ii. 295
Monument of Salvator Rosa, i. 326
——— to Julius Cæsar, i. 457
Morals, depraved state of, in Rome, ii. 245
Mosaic painting in St. Peter's, i. 413
Mosaic pavement in the cathedral of Siena, i. 31
——— in the hall of the Vatican, i. 99, 100
Mosaics, beauty and indestructibility of, i. 413; remarkable one found in the church of San

Lorenzo, i. 437; ancient ones in the Hall of Inscriptions, ii. 68, 72; manufactory of, ii. 309, 311
Moses, statue of, by Michael Angelo, i. 456
Mount Augustus, i. 172
——— Aventine, i.164
——— Ciminus, ii. 346
——— Cœlius, i. 113
——— Janiculum, i. 87, 114, 166, 206
——— Soracte, i. 63, 88, 89; ii, 347
——— Radicofoni, i. 41
Mountains, classic, i. 89
Murcia, altar of the Meta, i. 159
Muro Torto, the, i. 119, 121
Musa, Antonius, i. 93
Museo Chiaramonti, i. 92
——— Pio Clementino, i. 93
Muses, hall of the, i. 98
——————— sacred, ii. 189
Museum, Belvidere, i. 98
——————— of the Capitol, ii. 62, 71
——————— of the bones of the Capuchins, ii. 11
——————— of Florence, i. 6, 9
——————— of Marcellus, i. 142
——————— of Natural History, i. 142
——————— of Paintings, at the Capitol, ii. 84—89
——————— of the Vatican, ii. 61
Music, academy of, ii. 263
——— of England, ii. 271
——— of France, ii. 270
——— of Germany, ii, 262
——— of Italy, ii. 270, 271
——— of Naples, ii. 261
Musicians, itinerant, ii. 261

N.

Naples, music of, ii. 261; cemetery of, ii. 290; catacombs of, ii. 382
Naples, theatres of, ii. 269
——— botanical gardens of, ii. 285
Napoleon, imprisonment of monks by, ii. 224; stratagem by which he held communication with his brother Lucien, when in Elba, ii. 335, *n.*; reign of in Italy, ii. 384; despotism of, ii. 224; tomb of the father of, ii. 348
National dances, ii. 291
——————— habits of the lower classes, ii. 294, 297
Natural antiquities of Rome, ii. 283, 284
Naumachia, curious ruins of the, ii. 325
Navalia, the, i. 66
Nemi, lake of, ii. 368
Nero, tower of, i. 45; palace or golden house of, i. 136, 137; destruction of the, i. 138; baths of, i. 144, ii. 123; arch of, i. 157; descent of, i. 190 *n*; circus of, i. 257; escape of, from assassination, i. 334; death of, i. 336; tower of, i. 450; tomb of, i. 64, 120, 371; remarkable tree growing therefrom, ibid.; aqueducts of, i. 346; arch of, i. 157, *n*.
Nettuno, the ancient Antium, ii. 369
Nile, statue of the, i. 244
Niobe, statue of, and her fourteen children, i. 7, 8; casts of in the British Museum, i. 8, *n.*; hall of i. 7
Nozze Aldobrandini, celebrated painting in the baths of Titus, i. 316; ii. 97
Numa, visits of to the grotto of Egeria, i. 385; burial-place of, i. 87; site of the Capitol of, ii. 108
Numicus, a river of Nettuno, ii. 369, 387
Nymph Egeria, ii. 368
Nymphæum, a place of cool retreat

attached to Roman villas, i. 386; only remains of, ii. 357; plan of, ii. 358
Nymphæum of Domitian, ii. 357

O.

Obelisc on the Cœlian Hill, i. 354
——— in the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore, i. 354
——— Church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva, i. 354
——— Egyptian, i. 65
——— Farnesina, the, ii. 239
——— Fiano, ii. 93
——— on the Fountain of the Piazza Navona, i. 354
——— on the Fountain in the Piazza della Rotonda, i. 354
——— in the court of the Vatican Palace, i. 354
——— Palæstrina, i. 325
——— Pincian, in the Circus of Sallust, present position and description of, i. 355
——— on the Pincian Hill, i. 354
——— of Titus, i. 312
Obeliscs of Egypt, brought to Rome, i. 351, 355; description of that before St. Peter's, i. 70, 352
——— in the Piazza del Popolo, brought from Egypt by Augustus, i. 352
——— at the entrance of the Mausoleum of Augustus, supposed to have been erected one thousand years before Christ, i. 354, 369
——— in the Campus Martius, i. 353
——— in the Circus of Caracalla, i. 354
——— in the Circus Maximus, i. 353
Obelisc in the Circus of Sallust, i. 259, 354
Objects of worship in the Italian churches, i. 15, 16
Octavia, the neglected wife of Anthony, i. 282; portico of, ibid; 284
Operas and opera-singers, ii. 263, 269
Oppius and Cispius, summits of the Esquiline Hill, i. 175, 176
Oracles at Rome, i. 251, 252
Orizonti, landscapes of, ii. 101
Orvietto, i. 53; wines of, ii. 381
Orti Farnesiani, or Farnese gardens, i. 143
Ostia, gate leading to, i. 124; fortifications of, ii. 386; population of, ibid.; origin, and remains of, ii. 387
Ovid, house of, i. 159; villa of, i. 374; tomb of, ibid.

P.

Padua, botanical gardens of, ii. 285
Paganism, religious rites and faith of, i. 253
Pagan miracles, ii. 227
——— altar of Parian marble, i. 32; remains of, i. 49
——— temple and worship, similitude between, and Roman Catholic churches, ii. 26, 27
Pœcile, of Hadrian's villa, ii. 322
Painters, celebrated, risen from the lower classes, ii. 110
Paintings, by Albani, 'Venuses,' ii. 126.
——— by Albano, 'Rape of Europa,' ii. 102.
——— by Andrea del Sarto, 'Holy Family,' ii. 109; 'Portrait of Leo X.,' ibid.

Paintings by Andrea Sacchi, 'Dream of St. Bruno,' ii. 59; 'Apostles,' ii. 108.

——— by Annibale Caracci, 'Magdalen in the Desert,'' ii. 95; 'La Pietà,' ii. 96; 'Peasant at dinner,' ii. 101; 'Madonna,' ii. 102; 'Landscape,' ii. 127; 'Christ and Mary Magdalene,' ii. 131

——— by Fra' Bartolomeo, 'Holy Family,' ii. 109, 110, 139; 'St Peter and St. Paul,' ii. 145

——— by Agostino Caracci, 'Raising the Widow's child,' ii. 131

——— by Ludovico Caracci, 'Christ giving sight to the Blind,' ii. 131; 'Samson pulling down the Temple,' ii. 154

——— by Caravaggio, 'Gamesters,' ii. 112; 'Judas returning the thirty pieces of silver to the Chief Priest,' ii. 113; 'St. Anne teaching the Virgin to sew,' ii. 116; 'David with Goliath's head,' ii. 126. 'Holy Family,' ii. 138.

——— by Cignani, 'Joseph and Potiphar's Wife,' ii. 108

——— by Claude Lorraine, the 'Molino,' ii. 94; the 'Tempio d'Apollo,' ibid; 'Temple of Venus,' ii. 101

——— by Daniel da Volterra, 'Deposition from the Cross,' ii. 11; 'St. Helena's Discovery of the Cross, ibid.

——— by Domenichino, 'Communion of St. Jerome,' ii. 57, 59; 'Sibyl,' ii. 88; 'Murder of Peter the Martyr,' ii. 95; 'Sports of Diana and her Nymphs,' ii. 125; 'Ecce Homo,' ii. 145; 'Adam and Eve in Paradise,' ii. 153; 'Triumph of David,' ii. 154

——— by Francisco Mola, 'An old Woman with a Dog. ii. 131

Paintings by Garofalo, ii. 99

——— by Gherardo delle Notti, 'Christ before Pilate,' ii. 130

——— by Giulio Romano, 'The Nativity, ii. 13; 'Image of the Almighty,' ii. 57; 'Battle between Constantine and Maxentius,' ii. 53; 'Venus in the Bath,' ii. 128; 'Christ and the Woman of Samaria,' ii. 131; 'Bacchanalian Feasts,' ii. 146

——— by Guercino, 'Santa Petronilla,' ii. 60; 'Sibyl, ii. 88; 'Magdalen,' ii. 96; 'Prodigal Son,' ii. 98; 'Saints,' ii. 112; 'Rinaldo and Armida,' ii. 117; 'Fame blowing her Trumpet,' ii. 150, 'Saul and David,' ii. 144; 'Ecce Homo,' ii. 137.

——— by Guido, 'Archangel Michael trampling upon Satan,' ii. 10; 'Fortune,' ii. 59; 'Bacchus and Ariadne, 'ii. 89; Portrait of 'Beatrice Cenci,' ii. 103; 'St. Sebastian,' ii. 102; 'The Ascension,' ii. 133; 'Marys at the Cross,' ii. 134; 'Madonna and Infant Christ,' ibid; 'The Annunciation,' ii. 145; 'Andromeda,' ii. 154

——— by Lanfranco, 'Justice and Peace,' ii. 118; 'Orco seizing Lucilla,' ii. 128

——— by Leonardo da Vinci, portrait of 'Queen Joan of Arragon,' ii. 97; 'Leda,' ii. 127; 'Modesty and Vanity,' ii. 131.

——— by Michael Angelo, 'Prophets and Sibyls,' ii. 3, 43

——— by Parmegiano, 'Marriage of St. Catherine, ii. 127

——— by Pietro da Cortona, 'Triumph of Bacchus,' ii. 88

——— by Pietro Perugino, 'The Nativity,' 'Annunciation,' and Crucifixion,' ii. 146

——— by G. Poussin, 'Landscapes,' ii. 94

Paintings by N. Poussin, 'Triumph of Flora,' ii. 88; 'Orpheus,' ibid; copy of the 'Nozze Aldobrandini,' ii. 97, 101; 'Death of Germanicus, ii. 107; 'Miracle of St. Peter, ibid; 'The Massacre of the Innocents,' ii. 130
——— by Quintin Matsys, 'The Four Misers,' ii. 99
——— by Raphael, 'St. John the Baptist,' ii. 5; 'Transfiguration,' i. 229; ii. 57, 59: 'Sibyls,' ii. 2; 'Justice and Mercy,' ii. 53; 'Baptism of Christ,' ii. 57; 'Madonna del Foligno,' ii. 59; 'St. Luke painting the Virgin's portrait,' ii. 90; 'Portrait of Fornarina,' ii. 107; 'Holy Family,' ibid; 'Portrait of a Musician,' ii. 112; 'Deposition from the Cross,' ii. 128; 'La Madonna de' Candelabri, ii. 131; 'Portraits,' ii. 138
——— by Rubens, 'Altar-Pieces,' ii. 12; 'Portrait of Rubens' Confessor,' ii. 99; 'Portraits, ii. 131; 'Tiger Hunt, ii. 138
——— by Salvator Rosa, 'Belisarius,' ii. 95; 'Landscapes, ii. 138, 146
——— by Sasso Ferrato, 'Holy Family,' ii. 96; 'St. Joseph,' ii. 97; 'Madonnas,' ibid.
——— on touch-stone, by Sirani, 'Judith in prayer,' ii. 127
——— by Sebastian del Piombo, 'La Pietà,' i. 55; 'Christ tied to the column,' ii. 12; 'Flagellation of Christ,' ii. 26; 'Resurrection of Lazarus,' ibid.
——— by Paul Veronese, 'St. Anthony preaching to the fishes,' ii. 127
——— by Tintoretto, 'Christ,' ii. 107
Paintings by Titian, 'Martyrdom of St. Sebastian,' ii. 60; 'Magdalen,' ii. 96; 'Sacrifice of Isaac, ibid; portrait of 'Andrea Doria, ibid; 'Luther and Calvin,' ibid; St. Catherine,' ibid; 'Graces,' 125; Sacred and Profane Love,' ibid; 'Prodigal Son,' ii. 126; 'Landscapes,' ii. 135
——— by Van Molle, 'Diogenes looking for an Honest Man,' ii. 131
——— by Vandyke, 'Portrait of Rubens,' ii. 131
Palace, origin of the term, i. 129
——— of the Cæsars, founded by Augustus, i. 134; situation of, i. 135; destruction of, i. 139
——— Corsini, the, ii. 137
——— of Domitian, ii. 359
——— of Evander, ii. 368
——— of Licinius, i. 246
——— of Nero, i. 145, 147 *n.*
Palaces of Rome, ii. 91
——— of modern Rome, ii. 308
——— of Siena, i. 29
Palatine Hill, form and height of, i. 127; valley of, celebrated for the capture of the Sabine women, i. 86; history of the, i. 128; etymology of, ibid.; structures of, i. 129; ruins of, i. 130, 147; discovery of paintings in a large hall on the, i. 138; temples of, i. 143; sunset on the, ii. 389
——— library, i. 142
Palazzo Albani, ii. 146
——— Altieri, ii. 147
——— Barberini, ii. 106; present prince of, ibid., museum of, ibid., gardens of, ii. 108
——— Borghese, one of the largest palaces in Rome, ii. 124; sculpture of, ii. 125; gallery of, ii. 126, 128; gardens of the, ii. 159
——— Braschi, noble architecture of, ii. 121; gallery of the, ii. 122

Palazzo Caffarelli, ii. 147
——— of the Colonna family, ii. 362
——— de' Conservatori, ii. 84
——— Costaguti, frescos in the, ii. 117
——— Doria, ii. 94
——— Falconieri, ii. 133, 136
——— Farnese, ii. 143
——— Giustiniani, i. 221, ii. 122
——— Imperiale, of the French, ii. 144
——— Luciano, gallery of, ii. 130; paintings of Carracci, in the, ii. 131
——— Massimi, chapels of the, ii. 113; in the stables are the remains of Pompey's theatre, ii. 114
——— Mattei, ii. 118
——— Nuovo di Torlonia, ii. 132
——— Pitti, at Florence, gallery of sculpture in the, i. 9
——— Poniatowski, ii. 147
——— Quirinal, ii. 144
——— Rospigliosi, ii. 147; contains the famous fresco of Guido 'Aurora,' ibid.
——— Ruspoli, ii. 147
——— Sciarra, paintings in the, ii. 109, 112
——— Spada, description of, ii. 116; remarkable statue of Pompey, in the, ii. 114, 115
——— Stoppani, ii. 147
——— Vecchio, i. 20
——— Verospi, ii. 147
Palestrina, ancient Prœneste, i. 89; cyclopean walls of, ii. 371
Palilia, or festivals in honour of the god Pales, i. 129
Pallas, temple of, i, 29
Palm Sunday in Rome, ii. 176
Palms, artificial, borne in processions, ii. 181
Palombara, or gunpowder manufactory of Rome, i. 311
Pandects of Justinian, i. 12
Pantheon, now the Rotunda, i. 219; degraded state of, i. 220; consecration of, as a Christian church, ibid.; plunder of, by Constantine, i. 221; height, diameter, and circumference of, i. 123 *n.*; statues in the, i. 227 *n.*; best view of, ii. 123
Pantomines represented in Rome, i. 274
Paolina chapel, ii. 44; illumination of, ii. 185
Papal government, ii. 380
Papyri, chamber of, in the Vatican, ii. 35
Papyrus, manuscripts on, in the Vatican, ii. 36
Paris, statue of, i. 97
Partisans, supporters of colours in the chariot-races, i. 263
Pasquin, statue of, ii. 120; pasquinades or witticisms of, ibid.
Peace, temple of, i. 240
——- forum of, i. 205, 241
Peasants at confession, i. 417
Penitents, convent of, ii. 366
——— frequent processions of, ii. 171.
Penitenza Maggiore, or cardinal who absolves from crimes which no other priest can, ii. 187
Perseus, statue of, i. 107, 108; imprisonment of, i. 161
Pestilence, expedients for staying the progress of, in Rome, i. 273
Phaontes, Nero's freedman, under whose roof that emperor slew himself, i. 336
Phidias and Praxiteles, colossal statues by, i. 178
Phigalian marbles, ii. 313, 316 *n.*
Philosophers, busts of, ii. 75; theatre of, i. 276
Phocas, column of, i. 186
Piazza Barberini, i. 257
——- of the Capitol, now Campidoglio, i. 75

Piazza of St. Peter's, description of, i. 74
—— Navona, i. 250
—— della Rotonda, i. 220
—— Trajana, i. 207
—— Vaticano, ii. 147
Pietre Dure, at Florence, ii. 311
Pictures, Miltonic, in the Sistine chapel, ii. 43
—— of statuary in the Egina marbles, ii. 315
Pila Horatii, on which the spoils of the Curiatii were heaped, i. 202
Pilate, house of, i. 445
Pilgrims to the church of St. Peter's, i. 419
Pincian hill, i. 66
Pine, luxuriance of the, in southern climates, ii. 159
Pindemonte, the poet, ii. 280
Pisa, botanical gardens of, ii. 285
Piscina Publica or public reservoir, i. 311
Plan of the Circus Maximus, i. 258
—— of the Forum, i. 179
—— of the walls, gates, and seven hills of Rome, i. 113
—— of Pompey's theatre, i. 218
—— of Rome, ii. 68
—— of the Roman towns, ii. 391
Plautius, Lateranus, house of, i. 75
—— M., tomb of, ii. 320
Plays first introduced into Rome, i. 273; cause of their introduction, ibid.; representation of, before the court of critics, i. 142
—— extempore, ii. 267
—— of Goldoni, ii. 265
—— of Alfieri, ii. 265
Plebeian Ædiles, establishment of, i. 335 *n.*
Plenary indulgence, doctrine of, i. 419, 420 *n.*
Pliny, house of, i. 175
Poetry, and poets of Italy, ii. 279, 281
Poets, busts of the, i. 228
Poggibonzi, i. 26
Pomœrium, the, i. 115
Pompa Circensis, i. 262
Pompeii, houses of, i. 131; climate of, i. 134; amphitheatre of, i. 289; ruins of, ii. 345 *n.*, 346, 347
Pompey, remarkable statue of, ii. 114; remains of the theatre of, ibid.; tomb of the family of, ii. 360; mausoleum of, ii. 361; halls of, ii. 360
Pons Ælius, i. 334
—— Cestius, i. 333, now Ponte Bartolomeo, ii. 18
—— Fabricius, i. 332, now Ponte Quattro Capi, ii. 17
—— Janiculensis, i. 33
—— Milvius, i. 65
—— Nomentanus, i. 335
—— Narniensis, or ruined bridge of Narni, i. 338
—— Palatinus, i. 332
—— Sublicius, the first bridge of wood in Rome, i. 114, 331
—— Triumphalis, i. 333
Pont au Gard, i. 338
Ponte Bartolomeo, ii. 18
Pontecelli, a bridge over the Anio, ii. 333
Ponte di Catena, ii. 371
—— della Santissima Trinita, i. 17
—— del Lupo, at Tivoli, ii. 329
—— Lamentano, i. 335
—— Lucano, ii. 320
—— Mammolo, i. 335, ii. 318
—— Molle, i. 65; the scene of the eventful battle between Constantine and Maxentius, i. 334
—— Quattro Capi, ii. 17
—— Rotto, the first stone bridge in Rome, i. 332
—— Salario, remarkable tower of, i. 336; here Hannibal pitched his tent, i. 338
—— San Angelo, i. 70, 334
—— Sisto, i. 334

Ponte Vecchio, i. 17
Ponzo, island of, ii. 360
Pope Pius VII., palace of, i. 88; character of, i. 455; meeting with, ii. 8, 9; belief of the friars in his power to pardon sin, ii. 19; presentation to the, ii. 173; benediction of, on Easter Sunday, ii. 204, 207
Porcia Basilica, the most ancient remains of a Roman church, i. 191
Porcian meadows, ii. 342
Porta Asinaria, i. 125
—— Capena, or San Sebastiano, i. 124
—— Collina, i. 124, 247
—— Flaminia, i. 65
—— Latina, i. 125
—— Maggiore, the finest gate of Rome, i. 123
—— Portese, i. 117
—— Pia, i. 125
—— Salaria, Quirinalis, or Scelerata, i. 124
—— San Giovanni, i. 119, ii. 338
—— San Lorenzo, i. 121, 125
—— San Paola, i. 124
—— Santa, or holy door in St. Peter's, i. 421
—— del Popolo, i. 65, 124
Portico, Doric, of the temple of Hercules, ii. 369
—— of Clodius, ii. 359
—— of Liberty, i. 166, 198, 284
—— of Octavia, erected by Augustus, i. 282; library of, i. 284; remains of, i. 285
—— Public, i. 158, 282
—— of St. Peter's, i. 71
Porticos of ancient Rome, i. 282, 284
Portland vase, discovery of, ii. 67; destruction of, in the British Museum, ibid. *n.*
Porto, the port built by Claudius on the Tiber, ii. 387
Poussin, landscapes of, i. 319, ii. 88; house of, ii. 11. See *Paintings.*
Prati Porcii, or Porcian meadows, ii. 342
—— d' Annibale, or meadows of Hannibal's encampment, ii. 364, 366
Præsepio, ii. 16
Precious stones, costly figures wrought in, i. 7
Pretorian camp, remains of, i. 119; form of, i. 121
Priests, ordination of, ii. 200
Prisons, Mamertine, of Rome, i. 160, 163; here St. Peter was imprisoned by command of Nero, i. 161
—— of the Decemviri, beautiful temple in the, i. 249
Procession in the Sistine chapel on Palm Sunday, ii. 180
—— on Easter Sunday, ii. 203, 204
Processions during the Holy week, ii. 179, 181
Processions of knights, priests, &c., in Pagan times, i. 252
—— of penitents, ii. 176, 259
Præficæ, or hired mourners, ii. 77
Prœneste, now Palestrina, ii. 371
Promethean creation of man, ii. 73
Protestant burial-ground in Rome, i. 368
Protestantism at Rome, ii. 175
Prytaneum, at Hadrian's villa, the residences of the judges, ii. 325
Pulchrum Littus, or beautiful shore of the Tiber, i. 233
Purgatory, doctrine of, i. 383
Pyramids of Caius Cestius, i. 367, 369

Q.

Queen Christina of Sweden, her abdication of a protestant crown to embrace the catholic faith, i. 409; residence of, ii. 161
——— Zenobia, supposed palace of, ii. 320
Quirinal Hill, etymology, population, and ancient buildings of, i. 177; colossal statues on the summit of, i. 177, 178
——— Palace, ii. 144

R.

Radicofoni, mountain of, i. 41, 42; village and fort of, ibid.
Raphael, house of, ii. 147; grave of, i. 229; painting of St. John the Baptist by, i. 5; first fresco of, i. 32, 33; sibyls of, ii. 2; frescos of, ii. 51, 57; last work of, i. 229; arabesques of, i. 315, 316; cartoons of, ii. 47; historical paintings of, ii, 47, 49; loggie of, i. 93; ii. 56; oil paintings, in the Vatican, compared with those of Domenichino, ii. 57; skull of, preserved in Rome, ii. 90; earliest paintings of, ii. 128; casino of, ii. 156; mosaic copy of the Transfiguration by, ii. 310. See *Paintings*.
Reclusorio for females in Rome, i. 435
Records, public, destruction and restoration of, by Vespasian, i. 158
Rediculus, temple of, i. 387
Relics of the martyrs, sale of, throughout Christendom, i. 328
——— from the Holy Land, i. 397, 398, 433, 434
Relics at St. Peter's, exhibition of, ii. 189
Religion, rites of, among the ancients, i. 252
Remains of the circus, i. 265
Resurrection of our Saviour, ii. 200
Rienzi, abode of, i. 447; character of, ibid.; coronation of, i. 448; rapid fall and disgrace of, ibid.
Ripa Grande, the modern port of Rome, i. 87, 166
Rival frescos of Guido and Domenichino, ii. 6
River gods, i. 76
Roads, Roman, i. 201
——— of Roma Vecchia, i. 391
Rocca Brune, ii. 326
——— di Papa, anciently the Forum Populi, ii. 363
Rodolph Schadow, a Prussia sculptor, works of, ii. 307
Roma Vecchia, i. 391
Roman Catholic churches and ceremonies, compared with pagan temples and worship, ii. 26
——— coins, discovery of, i. 138
——— Forum, erection of by Constantine the Great, i. 184, 179; excavation of, by the English and French, i. 180, 181; monuments of the, i. 183; disputed columns in, i. 187, 189; ruins of, i. 190
——— houses, i. 130, 132, ii. 92, 93; ancient remains of, i. 243
——— palaces, general description of, ii. 91, 94
——— roads, i. 201
——— senators, i. 159; office and appointment of, i. 160
——— society, ii. 93, 238, 241; great defect in the constitution of, ii. 247, 297
Rome, first view of, i. 61; campagna and surrounding hills, i. 62, 63; climate of, i. 64, 69; gradual extension of the city, i. 114, 118; when founded, i.

129; conflagration of, in the reign of Nero, i. 146. 147, *n.*; Spencer's poetic description of, i. 148; early legends of, i. 151; modes of supplying the city with water, i. 346, 349, ii. 30; laws of interment, i. 256, ii. 288; desert country around, i. 375; ancient streets of, i. 452, 453; churches of, i. 454; plan of, i. 238, ii. 68; botanical riches of, ii. 284 view of, from the tower of the Capitol, i. 85; from the dome of St. Peter's, i. 425
Romulus, the deified founder of Rome, i. 153; straw-roofed cottage of, i. 129; citadel of, i. 86; temple of, converted into a Christian church, i. 193; alleged translation of from earth to heaven, i. 199; point from whence he set out to trace the boundary of his infant city, i. 215; statue of, ii. 86
Ronciglione, ruins of, i. 57, 59
Rosa Taddei, a celebrated improvisatrice, ii. 275, 277
Rostra, Julian, position of the, in the forum, i. 191, *n.*
Rostral column, ii. 85
Rostrum, site and total ruin of, i. 78
——— of Cicero, ii. 224
Rotondo of the Pantheon, i. 222
Ruffinella, the residence of Lucien Buonaparte, ii. 343; chapel of, ii. 348
Ruins of the Colosseum, i. 83, 85
—— in the Fish market, i. 284

S.

Sabine Hills, first view of, i. 62
——— distant view of, ii. 347
Sabine farm of Horace, ii, 337
Sacellum, i. 172
Sacred Dramas, performed in Rome, ii. 268
——— island, origin of, i. 87; natural formation of, according to Pliny, ii. 18; present occupation of, ii. 387
Sacrifices, human, i. 254
Saints, martyrdom of, i. 321
Sala della Lavatura, where the Pope washes the feet of pilgrims, ii. 186
—— della Tavola, ii. 187
Sale of indulgences, i. 420 *n.*
Sallust, circus of, i. 269; ruins of the house of, i. 270
Salt marshes near Rome, ii. 386 *n.*
Saltarello, ii. 291
Salvator Rosa, house of, ii. 12; tomb of, i. 326; See *Paintings*
San Casciano, town of, i. 25
—— Lorenzo Nuovo, built by Pius VI., i. 47
——— ——— Rovinato, picturesque ruins of, i. 48
Sancta Sanctorum, i. 299
Santa Casa, or house of the Virgin, i. 434, 445
—— Constantia, tomb of, i. 376
—— Croce, convent of, i. 435
—— Petronilla, the ancient Lavinium, ii. 369
—— Rosa, visit to the convent of, i. 54
—— Sabina, thrown into the Tiber, for her adherence to Christianity, i. 169
—— Theresa, convent of, ii. 221
—— Trinità, bridge of, ii. 221
Santo Spirito, hospital of, ii. 229
Saraconi, or Sienese Palace, i. 37
Sarcophagi of the Empress Helena, and Constantia, i. 100
Sarcophagus of Augustus, i. 370
——— of Lorenzo, in the anti-chapel or Capello de' Depositi, i. 9

Sarcophagus of Scipio Barbatus, i. 95
——— of ancient Grecian sculpture, i. 50
Sasso Ferrato, paintings of, ii. 96; See paintings.
Saturnalia, modern (The Carnival), ii. 252, 259
Satyræ, dramas of Etruscano rigin, i. 274
Saxa Rubra, or Grotto Rosso, the resort of Mark Antony, i. 375
Scala Cordonata, the ascent to the modern Piazza of the capitol, i. 75 *n.*
Scenery, comparative, of France and Italy, i. 23
Schola Xanthi, or office of public notaries, i. 197
School of arms and letters, i. 172
——— of gladiators, i. 172
——— of St. Augustine, i. 234
——— of painting, i. 34
Schools of the philosophers, ii. 325
Science, depressed state of under the papal government, ii. 282, 285
Scipio Africanus, triumphal arch of, i. 157; tomb of, i. 359; marble bust of, ii. 69; house of, ii. 103
Sculptors, Italian—Canova, ii. 298, 300, 304; Thorwaldsen, ii. 305; Rodolph Schadow, ii. 307, 308
Sculpture, museum of, in the Capitol, ii. 70, 84
——— Egyptian, ii. 64
——— Grecian, ii. 85, 133
——— Hall of, in the Vatican, i. 103
Scythian, commanded by Apollo to flay Marsyas, i. 3
Secretarium Senatus, where the writings of the senate were kept, i. 197
Senate House, or Roman Curia, i. 80, 188; dungeons of, i. 160, 161
Senator of Rome, i. 159; original appointment of, 160
Senator's Palace, i. 75; statue of Rome Triumphant, at the foot of the steps to the, i. 76; remains of an ancient edifice beneath, i. 158
Sepolto Vivo, convent in which nuns are imprisoned, ii. 221
Septimius Severus, little arch of, i. 214
——— triumphal arch of, i. 79
Septizonium, i. 138
Sepulchre of Christ at St. Antonio de' Portoghesi, ii. 189
Serapis, altar of, i. 268
Serenades, ii. 264
Services of the Holy week, ii. 183, 187
Servius Tullius, murder of, by his son-in-law, i. 174
Sette Salle, ruins of the, i. 322
Seven Hills of Rome, i. 88, 114, 126
Sgricci, the improvisatore, remarkable talent of, ii. 273
Shops of Rome, ii. 92, 93
——— or Tabernæ, ancient remains of, i. 146
Sibyl, ancient books of the, i. 142, *n.*; temple of the, at Tivoli, ii. 330, 331
Sicily, improved condition of society in, ii. 379, *n.*
Siena, volcanic formations in the vicinity of, i. 28; antiquity, population, language, and society of, i. 29, 38; cathedral of, i. 30; pagan altar of Parian marble in the church of, i. 32
Sienese school of painting, i. 34
Signs, language of, used by the Italians, ii. 255
Simulacrum, a sacred stone, said to have fallen from Heaven, i. 385
Siren's Cave at Tivoli, ii. 329
Sistine Chapel, containing the four

frescos of Michel Angelo, ii. 40, 45; services in, during the Holy Week, ii. 182, 187
Slaughter of Roman citizens by Sylla, Mariuś, and Augustus, i. 254
Slave, statue of the, overhearing the conspiracy of Catiline, i. 2
Slaves, traffic in, i. 195
Sober habits of the Italians, ii. 295
Spectacles, Roman, corresponding to the melo-drama of England, i. 277
St. Angelo, castle of, i. 402
— John the Baptist, painting of, by Raphael, i. 5
— Philip, baths of, i. 43
Speculum Dianæ, or looking-glass of Diana on the lake of Nemi, ii. 367
Spoils of the Temple of Jerusalem, i. 243; restoration of, by Justinian, ibid.
Stadium for foot-races, i. 255
Statue of the Eternal Father, i. 14
——— of Marcus Aurelius, i. 76
——— of the Nile, i. 244
Statues, Grecian, i. 2
St. Anthony, blessing of, on horses, ii. 233, 244
— Augustin, supposed school of, i. 234; convent of, ii. 3
— Catherine of Siena, house of, i. 38; alleged marriage of, and correspondence with Christ, ibid.
— Cecilia, the inventor of the organ, i. 460; church of, ibid.
— Dominic, founder of the Inquisition, i. 169
— Gregory, convent of, ii. 5; statue of, ii. 7
— John, convent of, ii. 223; gardens of the, ii. 224
— John Lateran, church of, i. 393
— Luke, academy of, ii. 89
— Lorenzo, martyrdom of, i. 176; church of, ibid.
St. Paul, imprisonment of, i. 161; martyrdom of, i. 432
— Paul's cathedral, contrasted with St. Peter's at Rome, i. 74
— Peter, imprisonment of by Nero, i. 161; dungeon of, with miraculous spring of water, ibid.; pillar of, ibid; death of, i. 405; visit to the sepulchre of, i. 408, 409
— Peter's, cathedral of, i. 69; interior and exterior view of, 72, 73; colonnade of, 74; tomb and chain of St. Peter in, i. 406, 408; general plan of, i. 407; tombs of the popes in, i. 412; ascent to the top of, i. 423; view from the dome of, i. 425; illuminations of, ii. 208, 209
— Sebastian, martyrdom of, i. 146 *n.*; painting of the, i. 326
Statues, gallery of, in the Vatican, i. 103
Steps to the church of Ara Cœli, ascended by Julius Cæsar, ii. 16
Stone, Tiburtine, of which St. Peter's is built, i. 74; properties of, ibid.
——— first bridge of, i. 332
Street of tombs, i. 356
Suburbs of Rome, i. 116, 118
Sybilline books, preservation of by Augustus, i. 142

T.

Tabularium, an ancient edifice in which the laws and public records were kept, i. 158; destruction of, in the reign of Vespasian, ibid.
Tapestries from the cartoons of Raphael, i. 101; removal of, by the French, and recovery by the present Pope, i. 102

Tiberius, baths of, i. 141; house of, i. 136, 146; triumphal arch of, i. 197
Tibur, ii. 332; antiquity of, ibid.
Tiburtine stone, of which St. Peter's is built, i. 74
Time, mode of reckoning, in the south of Italy, ii. 9 *n.*
Titian, picture of the Graces, by, ii. 125, 126; sacred and profane Love, by, ibid. See *Paintings.*
Titus, baths of, i. 311; triumphal arch of, i. 81, 341
Tivoli, i. 89; ii. 328; cascades of, ii. 329, 330; beautiful scenery of, ii. 339; temple of the Sibyl at, ii. 330; its projected removal, ii. 331
Tomb of Ascanius, ii. 360, 363
—— of the Archdukes, in the cathedral of Florence, i. 9
—— of Cecilia Metella, the most beautiful sepulchral monument in the world, i. 365, 366
—— of the Claudian family, i. 358
—— of Clement XII., i. 395
—— of Cosmo de' Medici, i. 11
—— Dante, i. 16
—— of the Empress Helena, i. 379
—— of the Horatii and Curiatii, ii. 360, 663
—— of Lucullus, ii. 348
—— M. Plautius and his family, ii. 320
—— of the Magnilla family, i. 366
—— of Michael Angelo, i. 12
—— of Nero, i. 64
—— of Ovid, i. 374
—— of Paul III., i. 410
—— Pompey, ii. 360
—— of Salvator Rosa, i. 326
—— of Santa Constantia, i. 376
—— of the Scipios, recent discovery of, i. 359; reputed tomb of the, i, 364
—— of the Servilia family, i. 365
—— of the Stuart family, ii. 349
—— of St. Peter, i. 72, 405
Tomb of Tasso, ii. 24
—— Tullia, ii. 360
—— Urban VIII., in St. Peter's, i. 41
—— of Vibius Marius, at Siena, i. 36
Tombs of the Popes in St. Peter's, i. 411
—— of the Romans, i. 356, 358; form and arrangement of, i. 363; inscription on one of the few permitted within the city, i. 357 *n.*; streets of, i. 356
Torre di Quinto, i. 372
Torso, the favourite study of Michael Angelo, i. 94; criticisms on the, by Winkelman, i. 94 *n.*
Totila, destruction of Aurelian's walls by, i. 118; entry of, into Rome, i. 125; threatened destruction of the city by, ibid.; bridge destroyed by, i. 337
Tower of Cecilia Metella, i. 86
—— of the Capitol, view of Rome from, i. 85
—— on the Ponte Lucano, ii. 320
—— of Nero, i. 45
Trajan, forum of, i. 207; famous equestrian statue of, i, 210; triumphal arch of, i. 211; bark of, discovered in the Lake of Nemi, ii. 367; column of, i. 92, 211, ii. 371
Trastevere, that part of Rome beyond the Tiber, ii. 19; insalubrious climate of, ii. 22; church of Santa Maria in, ii. 23
Travertine stone, used in Italian buildings, i. 74
Tre Ore, or "three hours of agony," service of the, ii. 191, 192
Trevi, fountains of, ii. 29
Tribunal named the Sessorium, i. 247
Tribune, gallery of, paintings in the, i. 6.
—— in the Sistine chapel, ii. 183

Trinità de' Monti, the favourite residence of men of genius, ii. 12; view of the illumination of St. Peter's from, ii. 209
Triumphal Way, ii. 364
Trophies of Marius, on the Capitoline Hill, i. 156; ruins of the, ii. 161
True Cross, portion of the, exhibited in the church of Santa Croce, i. 433; discovery of, at Jerusalem, ibid.; exhibition of the, at St. Peter's, during the Holy Week, ii. 189
Tullia, tomb of, ii. 360
Tullian Wall, i. 119
——— or Mamertine Prisons, i. 160
Tullus Hostilius, extension of Rome by, i. 114
Tusculum, site of, ii. 343; excavated ruins of, ii. 345
Twins, royal, nurtured by a wolf, i. 86; Etruscan statue of, i. 193; dedication of, i. 192

U.

Ulpian library,
Unfinished statues by Michel Angelo, i. 10
Unique Grecian sculpture, i. 5, 34
Urban VIII., tomb of, i. 411

V.

Val Aricia, ii. 368
Vale of Tempe, ii. 323
—— Murcia, or Myrtia, i. 259
Vallombrosa, vineyards and olive-groves of, i. 21, 22
Vase, Portland, ii. 67
Vases, ancient and modern, i. 7
——— in the gallery of the Vatican, ii. 70
Vases, Antediluvian, ii. 361
Vatican, description of, i. 91, 96; statues of heroes, emperors, and gods in the, i. 93; octagonal court of, i. 95; hall of animals in the, i. 96; origin of the name, i. 98; geographical galleries of, i. 101; gallery of statues, i. 103; library of, ii. 33, 38; loggie of the, ii. 59; museum of, ii. 61; picture-gallery of, i. 103
Vegetation, luxuriance of, in the southern climates, i. 21
Veii, site of the ancient city of, i. 373; siege of, ii. 355
Veil, ceremony of taking, ii. 215, 218
Velabrum, the, i. 192, 215
Velletri, reputed birthplace of Augustus, ii. 369; now the resort of robbers, ii. 374
Venetian school of painting, ii. 39, *n*; music of, ii. 261
Venus, Cnidian, of Praxiteles, description of, by Pliny, i. 9
——— of Canova, i. 9, ii. 301
——— di Medicis, description of, i. 1, 2
——— of Titian, i. 5
——— temples of, i. 244, 247, 252
Vesta, temple and sacred grove of, i. 192
Vestal virgins, first institution of, by Numa, i. 192
——————— buried alive, i. 271;
Vesuvio, the generic name for a volcano in Italy, i. 43
Vesuvius, eruptions of, ii. 346, *n*. place of interment, i. 124
Vetturino travelling, i. 24
Via Appia, i. 146, ii. 368, 384
—— Ardentina, i. 364
—— Cassia, i. 53, 64
—— Crucis, i. 143
—— Flaminia, i. 64
—— Latina, the modern road to Frascati, i. 389; remains of antiquity on the, i. 390

Via Nomentana, i. 122, 335
—— Nova, i. 201
—— Ostensis, ii. 386
—— Sacra, origin of the term, i. 87; description of, i. 200
—— Triumphalis, i. 82; ii. 363
—— Valeria, i. 364
Vibius Marians, tomb of, i. 64
Vico, lake of, i. 57
—— de Cornelj, i. 79
Vicus Jugarius, i. 201
—— Tuscus, i. 201, *n.*
View of Florence, i. 12
—— of Rome, i. 61, 85, 147, 148, 425
Villa Adriana, invaluable statues found in, i. 98
—— Aldobrandini, ii. 160, 341
—— Albani, ii. 165; museum of, ibid.; description of, ii. 166
—— Altieri, ii. 161
—— of Archias, the poet, ii. 336
—— Barberini, ii. 359; view from the terrace of, ibid.
—— of Catullus, ii. 335
—— of Cicero, ii. 350
—— of Clodius, ii. 359; portico of, ibid.
—— of Domitian, scattered vestiges of, ii. 359
—— d'Este, erected by Cardinal Hippolito d'Este, ii. 336
—— of Gabinius, ruins of the, ii. 345
—— Giraud, in Trastevere, remarkable Casino of, ii. 162
—— of Horace, ii. 335
—— of Hadrian, ii. 321; ruins of, ii. 322, 326; destruction of, ii. 327
—— Lanti, ii. 162
—— of Lepidus, ii. 336
—— of Livia, i. 374
—— Ludovisi, ii. 149; statues and paintings of, ii. 150, 153
—— Madama, on Monte Mario, ii. 164
—— Magnani or Spada, i. 144
Villa Massimi, i. 328
—— Mattei, ii. 162
—— of Mecænas, ii. 334
—— Medicis, on the Pincian Hill, ii. 162
—— Mondragone, ii. 342; magnificent avenues of the, ibid.
—— Palombara, ii. 161
—— Pamfili, on Mount Janiculum, ii. 162
—— of Piso, ii. 336
—— of Pliny the younger, ii. 398
—— Roman, rooms in a, i. 389
—— Tusculan, of Cicero, i. 89; mosaics brought from, i. 100; site of the, ii. 343, 350
—— of Pompey, ii. 359; remains of, ii. 360
—— of Propertius, ii. 336
—— of Quintilius Varus, ii. 335
—— of Vopiscus, ii. 336, *n.*
Villas of Modern Rome, ii. 156
Viminal Hill, present uncertainty of its locality, i. 176; etymology of, i. 77
Vines and vineyards of Italy, i. 23; mode of cultivating, in Madeira, ibid.
Vintage feast, in Trastevere, ii. 22
Virbius, grove of, ii. 367
Virgil, manuscript copy of, in the library of Milan, i. 36; house of, 175
Virgin Mary, preference given to, as an object of worship in Italian churches, i. 15; miraculous image of, i. 25; portrait of, painted by St. Luke, i. 168; house of, i. 434, 435
Virginius, site of the murder of Virginia by, i. 199
Viterbo, this town contains 28 convents, i. 53; churches of, i. 54, 55
———— battle of, i. 56
———— mountains of, the classical Ciminus, i. 57
Vivarium, in which wild beasts were

kept for exhibition in the Colosseum, i. 297
Volcanos, i. 28, ii. 347, 366, 367
Volscian Hills, extent of the, ii. 378
Volsinium, site of, i. 48, 50
Vulcan, altar of, i. 199; here blood rained from heaven for 2 days, ibid.

W.

Walls of Aurelian, i. 116, 118
Walls of the city, and Prætorian camp, i. 121
—— Cyclopean, remains of, at Cora, ii. 370; peculiar formation of, ii. 371
—— —— at Palestrina, ii. 371
—— of the palace of the Cæsars, built of brick, i. 242; durability of, i. 243
—— of Rome, i. 113, 115, 119; ancient buildings comprised in them, i. 120, 122; vestiges of antiquity found in the, i. 119
—— of Republican Rome, i. 271
Walls of Servius Tullius, i. 119 271
Waterloo Bridge, Canova's opinion of, i. 339, *n.*
Whetter, Rémouleur or Arrotino, i. 2, 4; Livy's account of the statue, i. 3
Wild beasts for the Amphitheatre, fed with criminals, i. 291; combats of, ibid.; dens for, i. 297
—— Boars in the vicinity of Rome, ii. 296
Windows, adaptation of to Gothic architecture, not to Grecian, i. 73; disputed existence of in Roman houses, i. 131, 132, 133, *n.*
Wolf and Twins, bronze statue of, i. 193; ii. 86
Wool, sacred, manufactured into robes for the Archbishops, ii. 234
Works in precious stones, i. 7
Wrestlers, the famous group of, in the Florentine Gallery, i. 4

Xystum, or place for wrestling, i. 325

Zelum, or asylum for outlaws, i. 157

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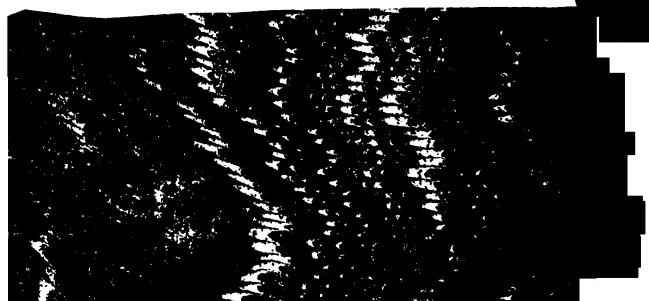
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